THE EXTINCTION

OF THE

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

IN

NORTH AFRICA.

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BY

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PREFACE.

IN breaking ground almost untrodden by modern writers I have met with many difficulties, especially in finding sources of information. In overcoming these I have to acknowledge much kind assistance, without which indeed this essay could never have been undertaken or brought to a conclusion. Mr Thomas Hodgkin, D.C.L., and the late Comte de Mas Latrie both shewed the utmost kindness in answering the letters of a beginner in the art of which they were masters. The Rev. H. B. Swete, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, was kind enough to give much valuable advice and the Rev. W. Cunningham, D.D., of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Mr James Kennedy of the East India Club, referred me to information I should not otherwise have obtained.

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have also examined authorities which were beyond my reach.

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Bishop's College,
Lennoxville, P.Q., Canada,
June, 1898.

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THE EXTINCTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN NORTH AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

The problem presented by the decline and fall of the Churches of North Africa is at once most interesting and most difficult. It is interesting because the Church of Carthage, formerly the most flourishing, the most earnest, and the most enlightened of all the communions of the world, has to-day perished and hardly left a trace behind. Yet it met with no trials that other Churches did not successfully overcome. The Copts, the Abyssinians, the Armenians, the Spaniards were all subdued by the Saracens, and yet all preserved their faith, even though in a debased form. The Africans, also, at one time seemed to be far more likely than these to withstand the attacks of the infidel. No one could accuse them of lukewarmness; their earnestness was almost fanatical and led them into dangers unknown to the careless. On

the other hand heresy never attracted the Africans. If Pelagianism for a time gained some foothold, St Augustine rooted it out; if Manichaeism had its votaries, they did not get much power; and on the whole no Church was more orthodox than that of Carthage. In the fifth century the Pelagians, in the seventh the Monothelites were opposed by the great mass of the people, and when the controversy of the "Three Chapters" arose the doughtiest champions of the Council of Chalcedon came from North Africa. Schism was indeed the great foe of the African Christians; but their proneness to schism attests the earnestness of their belief.

Moreover not only did Carthage escape many of the dangers which beset other communions; it conferred many great benefits upon them. The effect of the work or writings of such men as Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius and Arnobius was not confined to the African church, but was coextensive with Christianity. Mommsen and Milman both bear witness to the important part that the Church in Africa played in forming the received docrine of the Catholic Church. In his 'Roman Provinces,' the great German scholar says[1], "In the development of Christianity, Africa plays the first part; if it arose in Syria, it was in and through Africa that it became the religion of the world." Dean Milman adds his testimony[2];—"Africa, not Rome, gave birth to Latin Christianity. Tertullian was the first Latin writer, at least the first who commanded the public ear; and there is strong ground for supposing that, since Tertullian quotes the sacred writings perpetually and copiously, the earliest of those many

[1] Vol. II. p. 343 (*Eng. Trans.*). [2] *Latin Christianity*, i. 35.

Latin versions noticed by Augustine and on which Jerome grounded his Vulgate were African. Cyprian kept up the tradition of ecclesiastical Latin. Arnobius, too, was an African."

Yet this Church has perished so completely that the very causes of its ruin have disappeared. For the great wave of the Mahommedan invasion of Africa swept away in its course every record of the last centuries of Roman rule, and after Procopius no contemporary historian seems to have dealt expressly with the affairs of the Province. Only most careful research is able to discover the faintest indications as to the real state of the African Church after the re-conquest of the province under Justinian. The historian of to-day must piece his story together from the most diverse sources; he must find the few facts recorded by the Latin annalists; he must seek for chance references in contemporary literature; and he must welcome as important evidence admonitions addressed by the Popes to this portion of their flock. The political events of the time, and especially the Arabic accounts of the Moslem victories, will throw some light on the fate of the Church, and something may be learned from the monuments and inscriptions that remain. But when all has been found that can be found and every particle of information has been collected, the result will be meagre in the extreme. It will be even impossible to draw up a complete list of the Primates of Carthage and only a guess at most can be hazarded at the true cause of the disappearance of African Christianity. It will seem that the Church perished because it was the Church, not of the native population, but of the alien

conquerors. If it took deep root it was not amongst the indigenous peoples of N.-W. Africa, but amongst the foreign immigrants and Roman officials. In fact, if a Christian country can be defined as a country in which the natives are converted, Africa was not Christian; just as at the present day the Christianity of British India hardly extends beyond the European population, so in the Province the number of converted Berbers, though proportionately larger, was still insignificant compared with the mass of their heathen kinsmen. Consequently it seems that the fortunes of African Christianity were bound up with those of the Roman domination; as that failed, the Church grew weaker, and when it perished, the Church too passed away. The political power of the Empire in Africa fell because the Roman population first dwindled, and then fled away; and the Christianity of the Province was disintegrated and transplanted with it.

Roman Africa consisted of the districts now known as Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and Morocco. On the East the almost impassable desert of Cyrene cut it off from Egypt; on the west it reached the Atlantic; on the south, its boundaries were ill-defined, but Rome claimed at any rate a nominal suzerainty as far as the northern limits of the Sahara.

The population of N. Africa has always been very heterogeneous and the Roman province fully shared this characteristic. The successive colonies, planted by Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, though they mixed with each other, never united with the Moors or Berbers whom they displaced. Long before any authentic records were kept, a dark brown race appeared from

the east and south and a people of a lighter brown from the north-west. These soon coalesced in the Moorish people and their common language with its written characters, which still exists, shews that in historical times they had become one nation. Neither the negroes of the Sahara nor the fair races of Europe bear any ethnological likeness to the Moors, and their nearest relations amongst other peoples seem to be the Iberians of Spain.

The colonies, which lined the Mediterranean seaboard, introduced a much more complex population. The northern districts of Africa have always attracted a curious mixture of peoples, and from the earliest times settlers of different nationalities took up their abode there. Amongst the earliest to arrive were the Greeks, who founded several cities in Cyrene and Tripoli. However they left hardly any traces of their stay; their civilisation passed away, and the only relics of their former presence were the names of a few towns, such as Megalopolis, Aphrodisium and Neapolis.

On the other hand the colonists from Phoenicia were of supreme importance and moulded the destinies of their adopted country for many centuries. Gades, their first settlement, seems to date from almost prehistoric times and was perhaps contemporaneous with the Fall of Troy. It is unlikely that they ever held much inland territory or at first united with the Berber population; in the days when the man, who came to the strong as the peaceful trader, became among weaker tribes the cruel slave-dealer, friendly intercourse between the new-comers and the old inhabitants was nearly unknown. On the other hand, as centuries went by, the

coast and sea-board of Africa was so thickly studded with Phoenician settlements that in the Punic Wars it seemed to the Roman statesmen that the conquest of Carthage implied the subjugation of Africa; nor was it until the arms of Scipio were crowned with victory, that they perceived that in reality their work was just begun.

The Phoenicians may not have been the only colonists from Syria. Procopius tells a tale of a pillar set up to commemorate the arrival of the Girgashites, fleeing before the "robber Joshua[1]," and Ibn Khaldoun, the Arabic historian, gives a long list of Berber tribes of Tripoli and Morocco, who observed the rites of the Jewish religion[2]. Of course Jews were in Africa as they were in all the world, and an inscription records the presence of one of them in Mauritania Sitifiensis[3]. But even if their presence were actually proved, none of these peoples formed an important element in the African population. Tissot however sees reason to doubt the accuracy of Procopius; and, as no writer but Ibn Khaldoun, who lived five hundred years after the event, mentions the Jewish Moors, it seems probable that he has mistaken for Judaism some debased form of Christianity.

Last and most important of all the great colonizing peoples were the Romans. Brought across the sea by their rivalry with Carthage, it was long before they conquered the whole territory which formed the Province of Africa. Like ourselves in India, they were led on from conquest to conquest and from annexation

[1] *de bello Vandalico*, ii. 10. [2] Slane's Translation, page 208.
[3] *C. I. L.* 8499.

to annexation, until at length they reached what may be called the 'scientific frontier.' At first they only stepped in where Carthage had been before, and were willing to set up native states under their suzerainty; but the civil wars at the rise of the Empire mark the practical absorption of the whole of N.-W. Africa with the provincial system. After that, one Roman general after another gradually drove the Moors back, until at the time of the Antonines, the Roman dominion stretched, in name at least, from Tripoli to the Atlantic, and from the Sahara to the Mediterranean. Practically, however, the actual territory ruled from Carthage did not extend further west than modern Algeria. There were many Roman cities in Mauritania Tingitana, which had been founded by Augustus and Claudius for military and commercial reasons; but the mountains that intervened practically cut them off altogether from the rest of Africa. There was no road from Caesarea to Tingi, and the 200 miles between the latter and Russ-addir had to be travelled by sea. Consequently Tingitana plays no part in the history of Africa and indeed at a later time was counted part of Spain[1].

The population of the province in the early years of the fourth century when the Church first began to fail, falls naturally into two great divisions. The civilized Liby-Phoenicians inhabited the sea-coast from Leptis to Caesarea and reached as far inland as a rough line drawn from Caesarea through Mount Aurasius to

[1] This account of Africa is based on Tissot, *Géographie comparée de la province romaine d'Afrique*, Vol. I. 2nd pt. Bk. I. ch. i. §§ 1, 2; Gaston Boissier, *L'Afrique romaine*, ch. i.; Mommsen, *Provinces from Caesar to Diocletian*, ch. xiii.

Leptis. This triangle was shut in by the solid mass of the Moors. The mountains of Mauritania, the plateau of Aurasius, the deserts of Tripoli were inhabited by wild and terrible hordes, who liked nothing better than to burst forth and sweep far and wide over the cultivated and peaceful lowlands. For Rome was never secure in Africa; at the very height of her power she had to hold her ground by main force, and modern researches have proved that the statements of the old historians to this effect are true. From the first to the last day of the Roman domination in Africa, the Moors of the frontiers presented the greatest difficulty. Wherever the French explorers of to-day penetrate they find ruins of Roman forts, and that every strategic position within the borders of the province was once guarded and garrisoned by a vigilant force of soldiers[1]. It is this which is the all-important fact in the history of the Romans in Africa. Gorgeous in their splendour, wonderful in their luxury, invincible in their strength as the Roman Provinces seemed, their whole basis was affected by inherent rottenness. For centuries their foundation might seem firm; but sooner or later the earthquake was sure to come and utterly destroy their whole structure.

If the power of Rome had not failed when it did, if the supremacy of her civilization had been extended for several centuries, her hold on the African plains might have been more secure. For in all probability the difference between the Moorish barbarian of the highlands and his half-civilized cousin of the lowlands was very slight. As the latter lost his savagery under

[1] Boissier, *L'Afrique Romaine*, iii. § 1.

the influences of Christianity and civilization, the former also would have been improved by the same agencies until he settled down into a more peaceful and settled condition. Unfortunately this was not to be. The strength of the Empire began to fail after the beginning of the fourth century, and its growing weakness was most disastrous to the province of Africa. Year by year the pressure of the Moors became more severe, and the problem was no longer how to increase, but how to preserve the dominions of civilization.

The danger would not have been so great, had the Moors, instead of being an essentially barbarous race, possessed even the rudiments of civilization. Indifferent, however, to heat and cold, they wore the same thick cloaks the whole year round, dwelt both in winter and summer in stifling huts, and—except those few who were the fortunate possessors of a sheepskin rug—slept upon the bare ground. They ate only the coarsest kinds of food, and did not object to consuming the flesh and blood of animals which had died of disease. The Moors were quite ignorant of either bread or wine and devoured spelt and barley uncooked. Their moral degradation was equal to their physical; they had no idea of the existence of a God, and they knew of the civilization of the plains only to despise it. Even at the end of the eighth century Cahina the Berber queen ordered the destruction of all vines and olive trees, as having no value in the eyes of her barbarous subjects but only in those of the displaced Romans and advancing Saracens[1].

[1] For account of Moors see Procopius, *de bello Vandal.* ii. 3; *En Norveiri*, transl. by Slane, pp. 332, 340.

In startling contrast to this absolute barbarism was the luxury and effeminacy of the lowland population[1]. The richer classes and the townspeople enjoyed all the conveniences, and shared in all the vicious follies of perhaps the most corrupt and enervating civilization that the world has ever seen. They built for themselves marvellous palaces the remains of which exist to this day, and one magnificent pile has reached us in sufficiently good preservation to show to what lengths their luxury would go. Far from the site of any town or village of the Roman period, on the road from Sétif to Constantine, stand the ruins of enormous baths. They cover a plot 800 métres square and are lavishly ornamented with mosaics, marbles and statues. In size and magnificence they are worthy of a great city; but no city is near them, and they were erected merely for the private use of the household of a great landowner, called Pompeianus[2].

Building was one of the chief tastes of the Romans in Africa, every petty municipality seeking to prove its greatness by the pretentiousness of its public structures. In every town was to be seen a forum round which were ranged the statues of the Emperors, erected as a rule by the magistrates in return for the honour of their election.

Round their country seats, the rich provincials planted enormous parks. Procopius[3] tells us with all the authority of an eye-witness, how the army of Belisarius passed the night in the "paradise" of the

[1] For account of Roman civilization see Procop., *de bello Vand.* ii. 3; Salvian, *de Gub. Dei*, vii. 65; Boissier, *L'Afrique Romaine*, *passim*.

[2] Boissier, iv. § 3.

[3] Procop. *B. V.* i. 17.

king's palace at Grassé. Each soldier built a hut of boughs for himself and ate without stint of the fruit that grew there, yet, when the march was resumed, so thick and luxuriant was the foliage that it was impossible to tell that there had been the bivouac of more than 15,000 men. Such parks as these could not have been maintained in the dry soil of Africa without an immense system of irrigation. To extend this system was the favourite form of public benefactions. Carthage was supplied by two enormous cisterns, of which one is still used, while the other forms the site of a village. At Thysdrus the liberality of a magistrate provided water not only for the public fountains but also for private houses. At Tupusuctu, where supplies were stored for the Roman legions engaged in border warfare, the remains of a cistern 3000 métres square still exist.

The Roman colonist however, if not destitute of noble conceptions and a sense of public duty, was enervated by luxury. He dressed no longer in the toga, but wore loose robes of the most gorgeous materials after the Median fashion. He could eat only the most delicate food, and found life without his daily bath unbearable. The richer classes occupied themselves entirely in amusements. An inscription lately discovered in the Forum of Thamugadi (Timgad) expresses the ideal of the fashionable provincials. By the side of some "tabulae lusoriae" are engraved the words[1]:—

VENARI	LAVARI
LUDERE	RIDERE
OCC EST	VIVERE

[1] Boissier, *L'Afrique Romaine*, v. § 2.

—a summary which exactly tallies with the account of Procopius.

In Africa, as in other parts of the Empire, chariot-racing led to great popular excesses. Indeed its hold on the tastes of the people was perhaps even stronger than at Constantinople. Every little country-town had its circus, and M. Boissier declares that "coachmen then were Africans, as to-day they are Englishmen[1]." Enormous salaries were paid to successful drivers. Crescens won in ten years 1,500,000 sesterces[2]. St Augustine deplored the fascination of the theatre and the circus, and bewailed the fate of hundreds of raw young countrymen drawn by their glitter into the vortex of city-life from quiet homes.

For the fascination exercised by the towns of Africa, especially Carthage, was a perpetual drain upon its resources. The capital of the province, which ranked as one of the great cities of the world, attracted settlers from the most distant parts. Here was the seat of the civil and military government, here dwelt the Proconsul, the Magister Militum and numberless subordinate officials of every grade and title, and each day justice, supported by the irresistible authority of arbitrary power, was administered in the Forum. It was moreover the intellectual and commercial centre of Africa; its schools of languages, philosophy, and the liberal arts were thronged with pupils; its magnificent harbour was alive with the ships of all the civilized world. Its buildings were worthy of its greatness, and no heavier indictment can be brought against the Vandals, than their destruction of some of its finest

[1] Boissier, iv. § 3.

[2] *C. I. L.* 12504, *et seq.*

edifices. For in their senseless rage the invaders defaced the Odeon or Concert Hall, the Theatre, the Temple of Memory, and the magnificent Via Caelestis, which with its decorated walls, nearly two miles in length, was adorned with mosaics, and priceless stones[1].

There was however a terrible reverse to the picture. The streets, if stately, were unsafe; robbers and murderers lurked in the side alleys to seize the unwary passer by. Prostitution and still grosser vices were unblushingly practised in the full light of day, and a man who kept himself pure did not seem to be an African[2].

All this magnificence had to be paid for, and the burthen fell on the country. As the chief export of Africa was corn and her wealth was derived from it alone, the harshest tyranny was used to keep up a proper supply. At one time most of the land had been held by a few great landowners, among whom Pompeianus was probably numbered[3], and Nero is said to have executed six men, whose estates included half the Province[4]. But after this the Emperors took care to keep the most fertile parts of the chief granary of Rome in their own hands, and we find Solomon refusing to grant the lands of the Vandals to his victorious army, on the express plea that they belonged as a matter of right to the Imperial Treasury[5].

[1] Victor Vit. i. 3; Prosper, *de Promissionibus*, ii. 38.

[2] "ita enim generale in eis malum impuritatis est, ut quicumque ex eis impudicus desierit, Afer non esse videatur." Salvian, *de Gub. Dei*, vii. 65.

[3] *Supra* p. 10.

[4] Pliny, *H. N.* xviii. 35.

[5] Procop. *de bello Vand.* ii. 14.

The system under which these estates were managed, like all the rest of the provincial governments, gave every opportunity for oppression. The people were bound to the soil and at the mercy of "conductores," who had the land at five year leases from the "procuratores." Rather better off were the "coloni," who held their farms direct from the Emperors in consideration of a certain proportion of the produce and various dues to the "conductores," as laid down in the Lex Hadriana or Forma Perpetua. But besides these payments in kind and money they were liable to forced labour, and the "conductores" could demand their unpaid services for two days in weeding time, two days in harvest, and two days at some other season of the year. It is evident that such a system was certain to be abused. Occasionally an appeal would be made directly to the Emperors[1]; but what chance had a poor *colonus* of getting justice from a government official, backed up by all the power of vested interests and class prejudices? From the time of Constantine, even the *coloni* were bound to the soil, and not until the time of Justinian was liberty granted to their children by a free woman[2]. The glories of Carthage and other towns rested therefore upon a foundation of misery; while the city population rejoiced in chariot races and splendid buildings, the peasants, who ultimately paid for all, were ground down to the utmost poverty and distress[3].

But even in the most prosperous times, the state of the agricultural population was a real source of weakness to the Province. Their misery made them

[1] *C. I. L.* 10570. [2] Just. *Cod.* xi. 47, 24. [3] Boissier, iv. § 4.

turbulent and deprived them of all interest in the maintenance of Roman rule. Oppressed by harsh landowners, robbed of their scanty gains by extortionate tax-gatherers, it might well appear to them that they had little concern in the quarrels of those who misused them. The Donatists, who had caused not only a religious schism but a social revolution, drew their chief strength from the country people; and the conquests of the Vandals and Saracens would, in all probability, have been far more difficult, if the peasantry had been more attached to the Imperial régime.

This disaffection was a serious danger long before it was openly manifested, and then it became positively fatal. The hold of Rome upon Africa depended entirely upon her power of reconciling the Moors to her rule and of enrolling them among her civilized subjects. Her power, nay her very existence depended upon a successful solution of this difficult problem. Now the connecting link between the cultured inhabitants of the towns and the barbarian Moors of the mountains were the despised class of oppressed *coloni*. Living as they did right up to the boundaries of the Province, they inevitably mixed with the old possessors of the land, and the hybrid race of Liby-Phoenicians, thus produced, formed an invaluable bridge between civilization and barbarism.

Such a solution of racial problems was no new thing to Roman statesmen. In every province the policy of the imperial city was to train up the indigenous inhabitants until they were fit to become citizens of herself, and to effect this purpose was far less difficult in Africa than elsewhere. Here there was

no national resistance on the part of the numerous petty tribes, who, indignant as they were at their own fate, felt a certain satisfaction in seeing their domestic enemies in a plight similar to their own. Neither was any rivalry of diverse creeds to be feared. A marked feature of the Berber temperament is the essentially local character of its religion, whether nominally pagan, Christian, or Mahommedan. When the Moors were pagans, each village had its tutelary deity; when they were Christians, each township had its own Bishop and its particular martyrs; when they were Mahommedans, the local saint or marabout was as much revered as the Prophet himself. Rome on the other hand had by the end of the Republic few religious scruples. Her faith was an accommodating polytheism, which was as ready to recognise Saturnus Augustus in Baal-Hamman as it had been to identify Minerva with Athene[1]. In a comparatively short time a real connection might have been established between the Moors and the people of the country districts, which would have grown steadily stronger until the civilization of Rome had been firmly established in the Province of Africa.

For the natural tendency of two neighbouring races to amalgamate was assisted by the political necessities of the Empire. If the corn-supply of Rome had failed, the authority of the Emperors would have been severely shaken, and it was therefore their direct interest to maintain the agricultural population of Africa. In nearly all the provinces it had become a settled policy to introduce bodies of barbarians from

[1] Boissier, vii. § 2.

beyond the borders[1] and to settle them on the land as "coloni"; in all probability the same plan was adopted in Africa and by its agency a sufficient number of peasants were provided to cultivate the enormous Imperial estates. At any rate the defence of the frontiers was entrusted to a Berber militia, who were contrived to play a double part. The "limitanei," as they were called, were expected to beat off the raids of the unsubdued tribes, and, as their pay consisted in grants of land on the borders, they at the same time acted as the outposts of civilization.

In other ways, too, the military forces of the province helped to unite the Berbers and Liby-Phoenicians. Not only were the "limitanei" and the "foederati" entirely Moorish by race, but the permanent garrison of regulars, the Legio Tertia Augusta, had become largely so. For centuries it had been stationed at Lambaesa and there its ranks were recruited, its soldiers lived and its veterans died. To serve in the ranks while able-bodied, to marry a woman of the neighbourhood, to retire to a farm as near the old head-quarters as possible was the ordinary fate of the Roman legionary. His place was taken by his son born of a Moorish mother, or by a recruit from the uncivilized tribes of the hills. Every year saw more and more recruits of mixed blood entering the ranks until at length the legion became Roman rather in name than in fact[2]. Whether this was satisfactory

[1] Fustel de Coulanges, *Recherches sur quelques problèmes d'histoire*, p. 32.

[2] Boissier, *L'Afrique Romaine*, iii. 4; Cagnat, *L'Armée Romaine*, iv. 2.

from a military point of view or not, the continuous stream of veterans, Moors by race but Romans by training, was of the highest value as a means of effecting a union between the diverse nations inhabiting Africa.

By these three means then, the inevitable mingling of the Phoenician settlers and the African aborigines, the actual planting of African "coloni" and the gradual Libyanizing of the Roman forces, the country population formed a connecting link between the over-civilized Carthaginian and the barbarous mountaineer. Unfortunately for Africa this link never grew strong enough to bear a strain, and the Moors beyond the borders remained a standing menace to civilization.

With such a heterogeneous population it is not surprising to find that there were three languages in common use in Africa, Latin, Punic and Libyan[1]. Greek had never gained much foothold; it had only lingered as the speech of polite society, and by the time of Augustus the great mass of the people had forgotten its very letters. Libyan on the other hand was the tongue of the country people and of the Moors of the highlands. It was never a literary language and none of the African historians have written in it; for Hiempsal used Punic, Juba Greek, and Ibn Khaldoun Arabic. Nevertheless it existed and still exists; St Augustine mentions it, there are some inscriptions near Cirta in it and it is now taught in the French Government schools of Kabylia. It was in fact the vernacular of the less civilized parts of the Province.

In the more civilized parts Punic took its place.

[1] Boissier, vii. § 5.

St Augustine says of the people near Hippo, "interrogati rustici nostri quid sint, Punice respondentes 'Chenani,' corrupta scilicet voce, sicut in talibus solet, quid aliud respondent, quam 'Chenanaei[1]';" and in establishing a fresh See at Fussala, he makes it of the first importance that the new Bishop must speak Punic[2]. The "Circumcelliones" too could only speak to the Donatist priests "per Punicum interpretem." Still it was a failing language, for when St Augustine quotes a Punic proverb in one of his sermons, he adds the Latin translation with the words:—

"Latine vobis dicam, quia Punice non omnes nostis."

Of course Latin was not the natural language of Africa, and it probably never became universal. How far it may have won its way after the Vandal domination cannot be accurately determined, but the Byzantines said that the African provincials spoke it more fluently than the Romans themselves. Mr Hodgkin thinks that it was probably used with "an affected prettiness, and want of spontaneity and naturalness[3]." For it gained ground entirely through the learned classes. The Romans never insisted upon Latin as the official language of their provinces, and left so much of the local government to the hands of the old magistrates, that to force them to carry on public affairs in a foreign tongue would have produced chaos. No doubt the Church helped to spread it widely, and it is to Latin versions of the Scriptures written in Africa that we

[1] Tissot, I. i. 2. [2] Aug. *Ep.* 209. 3.

[3] Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, Vol. II. 240.

owe the basis of the modern *Vulgate*[1]. Yet the number of epitaphs which are to be found in Africa, which pay no attention to either scansion or metre, and St Augustine's remark

'Afrae aures de correptione vocalium vel productione non judicant[2]'

prove that up to a fairly late period, it was still a foreign language to the provincials. Yet, though it was almost universally known by all who pretended to any degree of culture or learning, St Augustine tells us that he picked it up by listening to others talking it[3], and Victor Vitensis is moved to the deepest indignation at the declaration of the Arian Cyrila, who announced at the Conference of Carthage 484, that he could not understand Latin[4].

Such then was the material on which the Church had to work. A province divided against itself by race, by language, by civilization, by wealth. In the cities a people, cultured and corrupt, rich and pleasure-loving, with the vices of the East and the power of the West. On the borders a nation of uncultivated barbarians, careless of even their own comfort, desirous only of plunder, ignorant of the very existence of a God. Between these two extremes lay the cultivators of the soil; a mixed race, mainly composed of Phoenicians and Libyans, oppressed and ground down, they helped, though without success, to bridge over the great gulf between the cultured Roman, and the barbarian Moor. Their own miserable condition prevented them

[1] Boissier, vi. 5. [2] *de doctr. Christ.* iv. 24. [3] Conf. i. 14, 23.
[4] Victor Vitensis, ii. 18.

from really uniting the two races; they stood too far apart from each and had too few common interests with either. As they failed to join conquerors and conquered together, some other body had to keep them apart; this other body was the army. The Roman domination seemed secure; but it rested on a most unstable basis. Only the ceaseless vigilance of the military commanders and the untiring energy of the legionaries kept the fair plains of the lowlands and the rich streets of Carthage from the ruthless raids of the Moors. As the fertility of the province depended upon a gigantic system of irrigation, so its prosperity relied on the efficient organization of its garrison; and as in the fight with nature man in the long run must be beaten, so when civilization is as selfish as it was in Africa, barbarism is sure to conquer.

On the outside the Roman Province seemed prosperous, but its prosperity was only skin-deep. The poor *colonus* toiled, but he did not reap; and the rich Carthaginian and the idle Roman grew fat upon his misery. The tiller of the soil cared little for a civilization he did not enjoy, and had no interest in trying to save it from the hands of the invader.

Meanwhile, ever watchful and ever ready to seize their opportunity, in their inaccessible mountains and pathless desert, stood the threatening Moors.

CHAPTER II.

The African Church to 398 A.D.

Although the African Church played so important a part in the history of Christianity, no definite information has reached us as to the date at which the Gospel first was preached in the Province or by whose hand the earliest seeds were sown. Tertullian, the first great figure in the annals of this Church, appears suddenly on the scene. Before him we know of no African Christians, and it is from his writings alone that we gather how numerous and influential they had already become. No mention however is made of the first preaching of the gospel in Africa, nor is any Apostle claimed as the founder of the local church.

Probably the Church of Carthage was an offshoot of the Church of Rome and came into existence without any deliberate missionary effort[1]. Between the capital of the Empire and the capital of the Province, there was continual communication. On Africa, Rome depended for her corn-supply; to Rome, Africa owed her government, her defence and her culture. The

[1] Münter, *Primordia Ecclesiae Africanae*, Chap. iv.

trade between Carthage and the Imperial City was constant and regular, and it would have been surprising if the growing Church of Rome had not seized the opportunity of extending the Gospel to Africa. It is easy to imagine that the first Christians in the Province were led to go there in pursuit of their ordinary commercial avocations; or we may suppose that Nero and Trajan by their persecutions drove some believers to flee to Africa and thus, as was not uncommon, these emperors helped to spread the very Faith they were trying to crush. Gregory I. indeed in one of his letters[1] asserts that the Apostolic Succession in Africa was derived from the Roman Church, and the great Pope's statement, if not conclusive, is at least probable.

The date of the foundation of the African Church is as obscure as its origin. It is however generally put down as the end of the first or the beginning of the second century. Gibbon[2] says that it is impossible to find in the province "any assured traces either of faith or persecution that ascend higher than the reign of the Antonines."

When once it was established the Church of Carthage took a prominent place amongst the communions of the West. In character it resembled the Church at Rome and its relations with the *Apostolic See* were always close. In speaking of the Decian persecution, Dean Milman emphasizes the connection thus[3]:—

"Rome, the recognised metropolis of the West, and

[1] *Ep.* viii. 33. *Ad Dominicum.* [2] Chap. xv.

[3] *Latin Christianity*, i. 59, also Münter, *Primordia Ecclesiae Africanae*, ch. xiv.

Carthage, the metropolis of the African Churches, now are in constant and regular intercourse. There is first a Punic league, afterwards at least a threatened Punic war. In the persecution, the churches are brought into close alliance by common sympathies, common perils, common sufferings, singularly enough by common schisms; slowly, but no doubt at length, by their common language."

At first sight it seems probable that the Church of Africa would have close relations with the Church of Egypt. But if the circumstances of the time are considered, the deceptiveness of the geographical proximity of the two communions at once appears. Carthage and Alexandria are, it is true, on the same continent, but there were many obstacles, both physical and political, to keep them apart.

In the first place Egypt and Africa are very effectually divided by the deserts of Cyrenaica. The settlements along the shores of the Syrtis, whether Roman, Greek or Phoenician, were a mere fringe along the coast and never reached far inland. Nearly all their communications with the rest of the world were carried on by sea, and such land routes as existed were traversed only by caravans, which were quite insufficient in number to maintain the constant intercourse necessary to keep up a close connection between two great societies. So difficult indeed was this overland travelling that even when the Saracens had taken Egypt, Africa with its desert frontier was thought secure from every attack[1]. On the other hand the voyage from

[1] Morcelli, *Africa Christiana, sub ann.* 635.

Carthage to Alexandria was not an easy one. The perils of the sandy Syrtis have been sung by every Latin poet, and the ancients in their open ships did not care to trust themselves amongst the treacherous shoals and sudden squalls of the Bay of Tripoli.

The rivalry moreover between the Egyptian and African provinces was a bar to their inter-communication. Both exported corn; both imported luxuries. In the natural course of trade the number of vessels plying between the two countries must have been much less than the number of those which carried the produce of Carthage to Rome, and of Alexandria to Constantinople. Moreover the distance of Africa from the Imperial City was only a third of that of Carthage from its great rival.

If the geographical isolation and commercial jealousy did not conduce to much intercourse between the two provinces, the characters of their populations did nothing to bring them nearer. They were essentially unlike one another. When Egypt was not Egyptian, it was Greek; when Africa was not Punic, it was Roman. The civilization of Alexandria was Greek, and Greek was the common language; the civilization of Carthage was Latin, and Latin became more and more the tongue of the educated. As the Alexandrian prided himself on being more Hellenic than the Athenian, so in later times the Roman Phoenicians of North Africa held that in them alone was continued the true stock of Rome[1]. Hence whilst Alexandria has given us the Septuagint, it is to Africa that the Church

[1] Finlay, *Greece under the Romans*, p. 386.

owed the first Latin Version of the Old and New Testaments.

Even in their theological disputes the two Churches differed; the class of problems which troubled the clergy of Carthage was not the same as the questions which agitated the Alexandrians. The Eastern mind of the Copt was concerned about the mysteries of the Trinity, and of the nature of Christ; the African was more interested in the troubles which beset the Christian in his earthly warfare. Could a man live a perfect life without Divine help? Did those baptized by heretics stand in need of further baptism? Was virginity a higher state than that of an honourable marriage? Such were the questions which the less mystical intellect of the Western Christians felt to be all important. When, as in the days of the Monothelites, an attempt was made to interest the Church of Africa in the questions that rent asunder Eastern Christendom, the missionaries found that their words fell on unheeding, if not unintelligent ears.

On the whole, then, it seems most unlikely that the relations of the Churches of Carthage and Alexandria were at all close. There was nothing to bring them together; the distance between them was long and difficult and their theological interests were completely different. In fact so little communication between them was there in later times that their independence had produced ignorance and this ignorance absolute schism. During the Vandal rule Fulgentius had to seek in every direction, in order to arrive at information about Egypt, and was then warned that the monks of the Thebaid were no longer in communion with the

Roman Church, and that they would refuse to admit him to partake of the sacred mysteries with them[1]. Even if this statement went too far and exaggerated the feelings of the bulk of the Coptic Church, there can be no doubt that it would have never been made if Alexandria, and not Rome, had been the principal external influence upon Carthage.

I have said that in all probability Christianity obtained its foothold in Africa at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, but it is with Tertullian that we first get any certain records of the state of the Church. Evidently in the first century of its existence it had at least numerically made very rapid strides. Gibbon[2] contrasts the "slow progress of the Gospel in the cold climate of Gaul" with the "eagerness with which it seems to have been received on the burning sands of Africa": Tertullian[3] himself taunts the pagans with the dilemma in which they would find themselves, were they successful in driving out all the Christians. But this rapid increase was by no means an unmixed good. Not only did their strength attract more persecution than fell to the share of any other branch of the Church, but it meant a rapid falling off in the standard of average Christian morality.

As long as the Church had been a small despised body, no one would enter it except from sheer conviction; but once it became fashionable to be a Christian ~~and~~ the new believers claimed the right of submitting themselves to those dictates of fashion which were scarcely reconcilable with the teaching of the Church.

[1] *Vita Sti Fulgentii*, § 12.

[2] Gibbon, ch. xv.

[3] *Apologia*, ch. xxxvii.

Partly through the circumstances of her origin, partly through the state of the society of the day, the Christian Church had always set her face against the luxurious practices of the richer classes. Stern simplicity in food, dress, and mode of life had been the invariable rule for the early Christians, and the bishops looked with dread upon any symptoms of nascent extravagance among their flocks. But now that the Faith had spread to every class it was impossible to prevent the more wealthy converts from surrounding themselves with those comforts to which they had been accustomed. In comparatively early days Tertullian and Cyprian had thundered in vain against the growing laxity of the Christians. The former in his "De Cultu Feminarum," the latter in his "De Habitu Virginum" censured especially the ladies of fashion for the costliness and luxury of their costumes; such admonitions as these however had little chance of permanent success, and the attempt on the part of the Church to enforce severe sumptuary laws on all members was on the whole injurious to authority. Those, who had defied ecclesiastical order in the matter of comparative non-essentials, soon presumed to do so in the weightier matters of morality.

For it was impossible to preserve the simple living of the early Christians and impolitic to lay too much stress upon it, when there were other demands which might fairly be made upon the converts. The regular routine of everyday life amongst the Romans involved many objectionable customs. A perfunctory respect to the heathen gods was exacted by the rules of polite society, or some ceremony had to be performed, which,

common-place as it seemed to the ordinary Carthaginian, was to the sensitive purity of the Christian licentious and immodest in the extreme. The convert, who did not give up entirely his old life and associates, was continually forced to choose between an awkward, and perhaps dangerous, assertion of his Faith, or an unworthy compliance with heathen practices. Christian soldiers in particular found themselves in a dilemma; much of their daily routine and even their oath of allegiance itself forced them to recognize the old gods of the Empire, so that it seemed impossible for them to reconcile their military with their religious duties[1]. Without doubt many converts manfully faced the difficulty and preferred to abandon their old friends and society rather than seem faithless to their Lord. But others did not, and, as Christianity became more general, the number of these warriors largely increased, and profoundly affected the religious life of the Province.

Not only did the morality of the Christians suffer, and Carthage continue to be even under nominally Christian influence one of the most luxurious and licentious cities in the world, but the actual spread of the true faith and the extinction of the old customs was greatly delayed. It was natural for men, who had neglected the teachings of the Church in small things to grow slack about greater things, and as their habits of compliance gained strength they looked with indifference upon the remnants of paganism. The synods held at Carthage on June and September 401 had to petition the Emperors that the still surviving heathen

[1] Tertullian, *de Corona*.

temples should be destroyed, and absolutely prohibited the holding of any more banquets in connection with them[1]. Even in the days of St Augustine the worship of the old gods had not died out, and his writings contain many allusions to his success in dealing with its suppression[2]. The country districts were the chief strongholds of heathenism, and various customs lingered in them, as they still do in the more primitive parts of England. Even Carthage was not entirely free from paganism. The worship of Caelestis, one of the national deities, survived, and some of the most powerful and most notable citizens were amongst its votaries; even the Christians did not repudiate it as they should have done, and some, trying to unite the service of Christ and the devil, approached the altar of God with garments still scented with incense offered to Caelestis[3].

In fact at the beginning of the fifth century, the Christianity of the mass of the Carthaginians was only nominal. The stricter lives of the clergy, who had withdrawn themselves from the lives and pursuits of the laity provoked ridicule rather than admiration. The pallid faces, long robes and close-cropped hair of the monks and hermits moved the people to derision, and the clergy as they walked through the public places were greeted with a storm of abuse, curses, laughter and derisive whistles. It was even possible for Salvian to assert that the Apostles had been safer amongst the

[1] Hefele, *Councils of Church*, Vol. II. pp. 421—3, 426.

[2] Darras, *Histoire Générale de l'Eglise*, Vol. XI. p. 21; Vol. XII. p. 145.

[3] Salvian, *de Gubern. Dei*, viii. 2, 3.

heathen than were the priests in professedly Christian Africa[1]. In his wrath at the infidelity of the Carthaginians Salvian compares them with other nations. Most heathen and savage peoples, he says, have some especial vice, but with Africans all vices are carried to perfection. If the Goths are treacherous, they are chaste; if the Alans are unchaste, they are not treacherous. The Franks are liars, but at least they are hospitable, and the cruel Saxons are remarkable for their continence. Most nations have their peculiar virtues as well as their peculiar faults, but over nearly all the Africans every vice holds sway. If anyone is accused of inhumanity, they are inhuman; of drunkenness, they are drunken; of deceit, they are most deceitful; of treachery, they are most treacherous. To all these vices they add unchastity and blasphemy and attain a terrible preeminence in wickedness[2].

To win such men as these to righteousness was no easy task, and it was unfortunate that the ideal adopted by the Church tended to separate the clergy from the people. It is easy to criticize nowadays the policy of the Councils and to point out the certain effects of the withdrawal of Christian influences from the every-day life of the Carthaginians; but it was not so easy a matter for the men of the fifth century to know how to combine their duty as Christians with the observances of a society so deeply tainted with licentiousness. We may regret but we cannot now condemn the decisions of the Councils, which bade the African clergy cut themselves off from their neighbours and renounce for ever the luxurious city life of the time. If they

[1] Salvian, *de Gub. Dei*, VIII. 4, 5. [2] *Ibid.* VII. 15.

had boldly faced the difficulty and tried to mix with the ordinary townspeople, while preserving their Christian purity, they would no doubt have met with many trials and continual annoyances, but their influence might possibly have been much increased and their example would have aided not only the cause of religion but the actual prosperity of the state. However it seemed best to the African episcopate for the clergy to separate themselves from the rest of their fellow-citizens and to follow a distinct rule of life, although many Christians managed to hold important and honourable positions in the state without falling away from their religious duty.

The theatre and all connected with it was in Africa and elsewhere especially marked out for the Church's censure. No cleric and no member of his family might witness a secular play; no performance was to take place on Sundays or feast-days, and no actor, who had given up his profession on his conversion, was to be forced to return to his old calling[1]. The dress of the clergy was to be plain and unassuming, and they were not to waste their time by trimming their hair or beards[2]. They were not to go to inns unless they were travelling[3]; they were not to be seen in the forum except on business[4], and they were not to undertake a journey unless their duty called them, and even then only by permission of the diocesan. The bishops

[1] Council of Hippo, 393, § 11; Council of Carthage, 398, § 8; 401, §§ 5—7.

[2] Council of Carthage, 398, §§ 44—5.

[3] Council of Hippo, 393, § 26.

[4] Council of Carthage, 398, §§ 47—8.

whilst legislating for the clergy did not fail to subject themselves to severe restrictions, and if they crossed the seas the primate of their province must consent and must issue formal 'litterae formatae' to them[1]. At home they were to live quiet lives, supporting themselves by their own exertions, but not entering upon any trade for the sake of growing rich[2]. To take interest for their money or to act as the business agents of others was especially forbidden them, and they were not to devote the energy, consecrated to higher objects, to mere secular employments[3].

Like all other branches of the early Church the Africans set a very high value upon celibacy. Second marriages were regarded with disfavour, and widows were encouraged to devote themselves to chastity. To the unmarried the glories of a virgin life were continually dwelt upon. The question of the marriage of the clergy was a more difficult one. At first all ranks seem to have been allowed to marry, but gradually the Church changed its policy. In the Popedom of either Siricius or of Zosimus, a synod held at Telepte ordered that no ecclesiastic should marry a widow, and that a layman who had done so could never be admitted to even the lowest orders; moreover if "priests or Levites" had wives, they were to love them as sisters and live with them as such. This last canon was evidently almost impossible to carry out, though the Codex Canonum went so far as to decree the deposition of bishops, priests

[1] Council of Hippo, 393, § 27; Council of Carthage, 405; 407, § 12.

[2] Council of Carthage, 398, §§ 51—3.

[3] Councils of Carthage, 345, §§ 8, 9, 13, 6, and Hippo, 393, §§ 15, 22; Archbp Benson, *Cyprian. His life. His times. His work.*

and deacons who had transgressed it[1]. On the other hand, the force of human nature was recognised, and as it was acknowledged that some men were weak, the Council of Hippo of 393 directed the "lectores," as soon as they reached the age of puberty, to choose definitely between immediate marriage and lifelong celibacy[2].

There was indeed much need of stringent regulation upon this point. Carthage, it has already been said, was particularly prone to the vice of incontinence. Unfortunate incidents had even happened in the Church itself, and the overzealous character of the Africans led them to expose themselves to dangers, from which prudence would have made them flee[3]. The consecrated virgins did not always live together, and sometimes shared the same house with young ecclesiastics, thus laying themselves open to scandalous, if unfounded, charges. Several councils had their attention called to this matter and canons were passed ordering all women, who had solemnly renounced marriage, and whose parents were dead, to live with respectable women, appointed by the bishop or priests[4]. The unmarried clergy of the inferior orders were not to visit them except by their diocesan's permission, and then not alone; while even bishops and priests if they went to see them were to be accompanied by other ecclesiastics or by persons of repute[5].

Even in common honesty the African clergy sometimes fell short of the standard of Christian morality.

[1] Councils of Telepte, § 9; Carthage, 357—90, § 3; 401, § 4; *Codex Canon.* § 25.

[2] Council of Hippo, 393, § 18.

[3] Gibbon, ch. xv.

[4] Council of Hippo, 393, § 31.

[5] *Ibid.* §§ 16, 24.

Cyprian complained that some of his brethren were guilty of fraud and peculation, and of cheating the widows, who had entrusted them with their property, and that others were so ignorant that they could not teach the catechumens or distinguish heresy from orthodox doctrines[1]. Later on trouble arose through the jealousy of the clergy and the encroachments of bishops upon the diocese of their neighbours; canons had to be decreed forbidding any prelate to be the "intercessor" of a vacant see for more than one year, and Bishop Cresconius of Villa Regia was threatened with the civil power for holding unlawfully the see of Tubuna[2]. Moreover both bishops and priests were inclined to treat the property of the Church as their own and to dispose of it as they pleased. The Councils of Carthage in 398[3], in September 401[4], in 421[5], prohibited any sale of such goods without the consent of the diocesan and his clergy. The Church went so far as to declare that if an ecclesiastic without property at his ordination was afterwards found to be rich, the burden of the proof that his wealth was honestly gained rested with him. If he could shew that his money was fairly his, he might use it as he liked, provided he publicly declared how he intended to employ it.

Evidently some of the clergy were totally unfit for their high office, and in two cases criminal bishops were deposed by the provincial councils. Bishop Equitius of

[1] *Dict. Christian Biography*, art. 'Cyprian.'

[2] Councils of Carthage, 345, § 10; 387, § 11; Hippo, 393, § 2; Carthage, 397, § 1; 401, §§ 9, 11.

[3] Canons, 31, 2.

[4] Canon, 5.

[5] Canon, 4; 9—10; *Codex Canonum*, §§ 32—3.

Hippo Diarrhytus was warned by the two Councils of Carthage, held in 401, and was deprived by the Council of 404[1]. Anton, Bishop of Fussala, was guilty of the grossest fraud and extortion, and was punished in the same way by the Numidian synod of 423[2]. Even at the beginning of the fourth century the conduct of the Donatists and of Purpurius bishop of Limata proves the utter lack of Christian virtue in the less civilised parts of Africa, for the prelate feared not to boast in a provincial synod that he had slain his sister's son and threatened to treat in the same way all who opposed him[3].

In spite of all these failures the African Church in the early part of the 5th century progressed, as indeed it could hardly fail to do under the guidance of the combined genius and piety of St Augustine and of those who came under his powerful influence. Some of its clergy and even of its bishops might be unworthy ; the town population might scoff at its simplicity and purity; the country people might cling to their idols; but for all that the cause of Christ was steadily winning its way in the province until it met its first great trial in the Vandal persecution. The organization of the Church and its bold resistance to the evils of the day prove its vitality. In the thirty years before the coming of Gaiseric, the African Christians were able almost to annihilate Donatism, to cripple Manichaeism, and to cast out the Pelagians. They could appeal with confidence to the secular authorities for aid, and many of the highest officials in the time of the Vandals were prepared to risk their all for their Faith. Evidently

[1] Hefele, Vol. II. p. 440.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 480.

[3] Optatus, *de Schism. Donat.* III. 8.

then the Church, in spite of many difficulties and much discouragement, had steadily gained ground amongst the very classes with whom the luxury of the Roman world is chiefly associated. Even the crimes, against which the canons were directed, bespeak the success of Christianity, and many of the failings of the clergy are such as are almost inevitably engendered by prosperity. If the system of celibacy caused abuses, its existence proves the Church's influence. If some of the priests and bishops were guilty of fraud, the riches to be embezzled must have been great to make men risk their temporal and spiritual positions for the sake of a doubtful gain. Moreover, whenever crimes were committed, they received a prompt reproof from the ecclesiastical synods, which met frequently to correct abuses.

The synodical organization of the African Church was brought to a high state of efficiency by its fourfold character: the diocese, the province, the episcopate, and the entire country having each its peculiar assembly. The clergy consulted with their bishop in the "conventus" or "compresbyterium." The provincial bishops met every year in Lent and Autumn. Except Tripoli, whose poverty forbade it to send more than one, every province elected two representative bishops to serve on a committee to be summoned for special business, while a general council of the whole of Africa was assembled at Carthage on August 23 in every year, at which all the prelates were expected to be present[1]. However, it was found that this annual gathering

[1] Council of Hippo, 393, Can. 5; Council of Carthage, 418, Can. 19. 2nd Council of Carthage, 401, Canon 8.

imposed too great a burden on the episcopate, and it was ordained that it was only to meet when there was real need for it, and that all provincial matters were to be settled as far as possible by the provincial synods[1].

In other matters the organization of the African Church was not so happy. The diocesan system was profoundly affected by a trait in the national character, which still finds its counterpart among the Berbers of Morocco and Tunis. When the province was first converted and as long as the persecutions lasted this local hero-worship exalted the martyrs and confessors to an unreasonable importance. In the time of Tertullian the reconciliation of excommunicated persons through the intercession of confessors had become a regular custom, and had already been abused by the wholesale pardoning of the worst criminals[2]. In the time of Cyprian the sufferers in the Decian persecution claimed even more power than the clergy. The lapsed, whether "libellatici" or "thurificati," asked their aid for readmission to the Church they had betrayed; while some of the confessors became so puffed up by adulation that they issued pardons to include not only the man mentioned but all his unnamed friends[3]. Finally, the bishops were solemnly ordered in the name of all the confessors to reinstate at once all the lapsed. Later on we find that as in the third century this excessive reverence caused the schism of Felicissimus and Novatius, so at the

[1] Council of Carthage, 409, Canon 1. For the whole question of African Synods see Dissertation by Garner in Migne's *Patrologia*.

[2] Tertull. *ad Martyres*, § 1; *de Pudicitia*, § 22.

[3] Cypr. *Ep.* xx. "Communicet ille cum suis."

beginning of the fourth no small part of the bitterness of the Donatist party was excited by the well-meant effort of Mensurius and Caecilian to check the exaggerated importance given to the imprisoned confessors. The sixth Carthaginian synod, held on the 13th of September, 401, had to protest against the multiplication of chapels to martyrs and decree that they should not be built except to contain relics or at any place intimately associated with the life of the saint[1]. The fantastic suicides of the Circumcelliones, and the caution exercised by the Vandal persecutors to check this tendency prove how truly characteristic and how fully recognised it was in the religious life of Africa[2].

But this intense hero-worship had still more important consequences than the adulation of martyrs. It profoundly affected the whole organization of the African Church. It led to the foundation of innumerable small dioceses, each of which had sufficient patriotism to resist strenuously any interference with their own autonomy, however well-meant or necessary. Already in the days of St Cyprian it was possible to collect together nearly 90 bishops in council, but in later times the sees seem to have multiplied enormously. In 411, at the great Council of Carthage against the Donatists, 565 bishops were present, 286 being Catholics and 279 Donatists. Again, in A.D. 483 when Hunneric summoned all the Catholic episcopate to plead their case against the Arians, 466 bishops appeared at Carthage[3]. It seems to have been the habit

[1] Canon 17. [2] Victor Vitensis, i. 14, *et passim*.

[3] See *Notitia* appended to Victor Vitensis in the *Corpus Scriptorum Eccl.*

to consecrate a bishop to any place which contained a congregation of even moderate proportions, and in 387 the council held at Carthage attempted to check this tendency by ordering that no new sees should be created[1]. It was impossible to stop the practice, and twenty years later another council of Carthage passed a canon declaring that, before an additional diocese could be set up, the consent of the Primate, of the Provincial Synod and of the bishop on whose jurisdiction the new see would encroach, must be obtained[2]. On the other hand, to forbid all multiplication of dioceses would have meant great hindrance to the work of the Church; for the need of more bishops increased with the spread of Christianity. St Augustine himself established the see of Fussala in 423. The Donatists had been especially strong there, but his determined efforts had regained the district for Catholicism, and as it was too far from Hippo to permit of his personal supervision, he obtained the leave of his Primate and carved the new diocese out of the territory of his own see[3].

Although the supporters of this system could point to the example of the great Bishop of Hippo, there can be no doubt that on the whole the precedent was a bad one. It was very difficult, if not impossible, to ensure a proper standard of education, probity and morality amongst so large an episcopate. The failings of the clergy, already noticed, were no doubt largely due to this system, and its bad effects were increased by another peculiarity of the African Church. The

[1] Canon 5.
[2] Canon 4.
[3] St Augustine, *Ep.* 209.

Primates of the provinces were appointed, not by merit but by seniority. In every province, except Proconsularis, the senior member of the episcopate, or "Senex" as he was called, held the Primacy as a matter of course[1]; the age, infirmity or other unfitness of a bishop, the insignificance or remoteness of his see, were no obstacles to his appointment, and not even Gregory the Great could get this curious system altered[2]. The only exception to this rule was the province of Proconsularis. Here the Bishop of Carthage was always Primate; indeed he wielded an authority over the whole African Church; to him all disputes about the appointments of other Primates were to be brought[3], and by him the election of all bishops and their translation from one diocese to another had to be approved[4].

This unique system had unique results. The most influential bishop was by no means always the nominal Primate. St Augustine was never Primate of Numidia; St Fulgentius was only Bishop of Ruspe; yet both profoundly affected the course of African Christianity. In fact under this system the divorce between real and nominal power was often complete and great jealousies constantly arose. In the days of Gregory the Great the influence of his friend Columbus far exceeded that of the Primate, and his close relation with the Pope brought on him the greatest odium. If position and authority had coincided in his case much of

[1] Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, II. xvi. 6.

[2] *Epp.* i. 74, 77.

[3] Council of Hippo, 393, Canon 4 (1st Series).

[4] Council of Carthage, 397, Canon 7.

this would have been avoided; but the system was at fault, and those who tried to provide a remedy only laid themselves open to misconception and failure.

In later times a means of correcting the errors of a Church existed, which had not yet been fully established. In the fifth century the Pope had not obtained the great powers over all Catholics which he wielded later, and Africa in particular regarded his claims with suspicion. About the year 418 a case arose in the Proconsular province which clearly defined the relations between Carthage and Rome. Bishop Urban of Sicca had deposed a priest named Apiarius for very serious crimes; the accused appealed to Pope Zosimus and was reinstated by him. The General Council of Africa, which met on May 1st, 418, at once passed a canon forbidding any cleric below the rank of bishop to appeal across the sea. Zosimus despatched Bishop Faustinus of Potentina and two priests to protest against this decision and to demand that the Church of Africa should allow bishops, condemned by their provincial councils, to appeal to Rome, and priests and deacons condemned by their own diocesans, to appeal to the other prelates of the neighbourhood. These, said the legates, were canons passed by the Council of Nicaea.

The African bishops were not convinced that these canons were genuine, and the Council of Carthage of 419 ordered an application to be made to the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch for authentic versions of the decrees of Nicaea. Meanwhile through reverence for Rome the canons were temporarily accepted, and Apiarius was permitted to resume his priestly functions, although to avoid scandal he was not allowed

to minister again in Sicca. Unfortunately for the Pope the investigation shewed that Carthage was right and Rome was wrong; neither St Cyril of Alexandria nor Bishop Atticus of Constantinople admitted that these canons had been passed at Nicaea, and it was discovered that they were taken from the decrees of the Council of Sardica of 343. Moreover, the conduct of Faustinus and Apiarius was not calculated to soothe the Church of Africa into a yielding mood. The former angered the Carthaginian bishops by his insolence; the latter asked the help of Boniface and Celestine, the successors of Zosimus, in his reinstatement at Sicca, though he had admitted the truth of the terrible accusations against him. Consequently the Council of Carthage of 424 wrote to Celestine asking the recall of Faustinus, repudiating the so-called Nicene Canons, and declaring that appeals to Rome were an attack on the rights of the African Church.

So ended the controversy. The last Council at which the affair was discussed was held only four years before the Vandal invasion, and while the influence of St Augustine was at its prime. Position and historical *prestige* might belong to the Bishop of Rome; reputation and moral weight rested with the Bishop of Hippo. What result would have ensued if the circumstances of the time and the influence of the two leaders had been different, it is impossible to say. Later on when the Arian invaders had destroyed the organization of the Catholics of Carthage, the advice and aid of the Pope was sought with much greater earnestness; but at the beginning of the fifth century it is clear that the claims of Rome met with little encouragement in

Africa. What the Pope could claim through the canons of the Œcumenical Councils, he got; and his advice was treated with respect; but further than that Africa would not go, and it asserted the absolute right to manage its own affairs after its own fashion[1].

The African Church in thus repudiating all external interference, and with such a loose internal constitution, had ample scope to display the two qualities which particularly mark its early history. On the one hand it shewed the most intense conviction, on the other the wildest intolerance. Though closely connected, these characteristics produced the most different results. The noble stedfastness which could support St Perpetua in the hour of her death, and the zealous faith which made hundreds prefer martyrdom to apostasy, rooted Christianity firmly in Africa; but the narrow fanaticism, which made some condemn Cyprian and Caecilian, the mad zeal, which rent the Church by schisms, and provoked the fanatic violence of the Circumcelliones, did incalculable harm.

The intolerance of the Africans made their country the soil from which schism first sprang into being. The two first schisms arose in Carthage: the earliest during the episcopate of St Cyprian, which when transplanted to Rome was known as Novatianism, and this was followed by the so-called Donatist schism, which arose on the question of the power of a bishop who had denied the Faith to confer the apostolical succession. The motives of the schismatics were not wholly unworthy and in judging their action allowance must be made for one

[1] For this controversy, see Hefele, Vol. II. pages 463—7, 476—8, and 128, 137.

of the most cherished convictions of the Africans, who believed most strongly that the validity of a sacrament depended directly on the character and orthodoxy of the officiating minister. If the priest or bishop were excommunicate, all sacerdotal acts done by him were *ipso facto* null and void; and the feeling of anxiety amongst the mass of the Christians of Africa, when they heard grave charges brought against the Primate of their Church was naturally intense. Undoubtedly such feeling animated the best of the followers of Novatian and Donatus, but unfortunately, in both cases, other and less worthy motives seem to have been at work among the leaders of these schisms. If for example it was quite clear that Felicissimus had no need to fear a rigorous enquiry into his trusteeship of the Church funds, his credit would be much higher, for in his case there was a real excuse for at least an examination of the conduct of the Bishop of Carthage. There is no doubt whatever that Cyprian acted wisely and prudently in fleeing from the heat of the persecution; nor were there in the later affair of Caecilian any certain proofs of the guilt of his consecrators. But at the same time it is most important to remember the African point of view, and to realise that a man who thinks that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the personal purity of the priest must have looked upon the charges against the heads of his Church with the utmost horror and alarm.

Novatianism and Donatism though springing from similar causes had very different endings; Cyprian was soon able to suppress the former; the latter probably

existed for four hundred years. For the stern discipline of Novatian found uncongenial soil in Africa, and Cyprian by his wise moderation and gradual restoration of the lapsed made the return to the Church as easy as he could for the followers of Felicissimus. Moreover, the actual state of affairs in Carthage afforded no excuse for the establishment of a new Church on the basis of no compromise with the pagan persecutors. Nearly all the Christians had complied in one way or another with the demands of the government, and in the time of peril it had been difficult to find enough priests to perform the daily services. It was absurd for such men to condemn Cyprian for his flight, and many of them viewed with the utmost anxiety the setting up of a rival episcopate. The mercy of Cyprian was therefore gladly received, and when in 258 the great bishop sealed his faith with his blood, the influence of the sectarians was finally checked. In other countries Novatianism shewed much vitality, but in the land of its birth it was already dead.

In sharp contrast to the rapid decline of this schism is the history of the temporary success of Donatism. Perhaps the want of a great man to nip the revolt in the bud, perhaps the slackening of discipline as the Church grew in size was the cause of its rapid spread, but for one reason or another the followers of Donatus became so numerous that they threatened to absorb altogether the orthodox Church.

In tracing the causes of the extinction of African Christianity there is no need to go at length into the wearisome story of this great schism; for it is a great but not uncommon error to pronounce it one of the chief

reasons for the fall of the Church. Donatism was at its full prosperity at the end of the fourth century; African Christianity was not ruined till the end of the seventh century. The three hundred years that intervened were full of the most momentous events, which had far more influence upon the destruction of the Church than the progress of the schism or the crimes of its supporters. Indeed the prosperity of Donatism was comparatively short-lived, and by the time of the Vandals was nearly extinct; the efforts of St Augustine and its own excesses had crushed its strength, and the few remnants of the great party that survived in Numidia in the days of the first Gregory were too small to be of any account.

The Donatist schism has however an interest quite distinct from its actual merits and its theological aspect. Viewed from the political standpoint it stands revealed as meaning much more than an ecclesiastical quarrel. It seems to be the expression of the antagonism of national interests and characters, which found an easier outlet in the loosely-knit fabric of the Church than it could ever have had in the political organization of the Roman Empire. At the beginning of the fourth century the form of Christianity was not yet settled, and it was even doubtful whether the state would abandon paganism; on the other hand there was small hope of success for a people rebelling against the might of the Empire. The field of theology became therefore the battle-ground of nations. Arianism was the creed of the Teutons; Catholicism of Rome. The victory of the first would have implied not only a theological but a political change, and the success of the latter

shewed that with all its spreading decay the Empire was still able to defeat its enemies.

The rise of Donatism in such circumstances gave it its larger meaning. At first merely a protest against the irregular ordination of Caecilian as Bishop of Carthage, closely akin to the history of Novatianism, it gradually widened out until it assumed the character of the partisan creed of all who harboured Moorish sentiments and dissatisfaction with the established *régime*. Even at its birth the schism drew its chief strength from Numidia, one of the least Romanized parts of Africa. The opposition to Mensurius and Caecilian was begun by the provincial council of Cirta, under the leadership of Secundus, Bishop of Tigisis, and the summons of the leaders of the Church of Carthage before this assembly was practically, if not as yet deliberately, an attempt to expose ecclesiastics of the ruling race to the censure of the provincials. In a few more years the Donatists had received very questionable allies. The Circumcelliones were Roman subjects only in name. They spoke Punic alone, and it was into that language that St Augustine proposed his discussion with Bishop Crispinus of Calama should be translated, when he wished to reach the ears of the rank and file of the party[1]. Their violence and blind fanaticism proclaims them largely Moorish in blood, and they were probably sprung from those semi-barbarian peasants and mountaineers who formed the connecting link between the inhabitants of the sea-coast and the uncivilized Berbers of the frontiers. The Donatist party therefore included

[1] Aug. *Ep.* 66.

a very large Moorish element, and its hatred of Catholicism was bound up and strengthened by the national dislike of the Roman rule. It seems, moreover, to have gained great strength under the tyrannies of Firmus and Gildo, and had become so numerous that its members were estimated as more than the Catholics. Probably the leaders of the national party found it to their interest to champion the cause of the Donatists against the Catholics, and at any rate the edict of Honorius, issued as soon as he recovered his power, against the violators of the Catholics, proves that he regarded the defence of the orthodox as most important to the State.

But Donatism may be regarded from a social and economic as well as from a political aspect. Like the Socialism and Anarchism of the present day it attracted all those discontented with their lot. Bankrupts, runaway slaves and fraudulent debtors swelled its ranks and tried to destroy the records against themselves by pillaging and ravaging in the sacred name of religion[1]. It became the gathering in which all that was unwholesome and corrupt in the State came to a head, and it embodied in its ranks every evil thing which the decaying social condition of the Empire had produced. Amongst such men, opposed to all law and order, the grossest immorality prevailed; and in their company were found 'troops of homeless women who declined matrimony, that they might avoid restraint[2].'

The victory of Donatism would have implied not merely a religious but a social and political revolution,

[1] Aug., *Ep.* 185, iv. 15. [2] Aug., *Ep.* 35, § 2.

and it could expect no greater mercy from the Emperors than it obtained. At its very beginning, before it had assumed more than a theological aspect, Constantine, perhaps thinking Christianity should be as much subject to the Emperor as Paganism, had punished the schismatics, like rebels, with death. Constans, angered at the excesses of the Circumcelliones, and their refusal of his clemency, drove them from the province. Valentinian, Gratian and Theodosius issued edict after edict against them and the whole machinery of the Roman power was employed to crush the turbulent sect which threatened the province with a reign of immorality and rapine.

While the State attacked it in the name of social order, it now met its greatest opponent in the champion of theology and religious orthodoxy. In 391, St Augustine went to Hippo; two years later he was chosen to preach the sermon before the Council of Hippo; and in 395 was ordained bishop as coadjutor to the aged Valerius. He had already begun his long literary warfare against the power of the Donatists with his "Psalmus contra partem Donati," and five years later he wrote his first book against Petilian.

Yet though within a quarter of a century the Donatists were destined to be almost swept away, there seemed small hope at the death of Theodosius of the ultimate triumph of Catholicism. The failing power of the Empire, the rising strength of the Moors, the diminishing numbers of the orthodox seemed to foretell the rapidly approaching extinction of the Roman influence, secular and ecclesiastical, in the province of Africa. However this was not to be, and the Donatists

themselves did much to cause their own fall. The usual fate of schismatics overtook them and schism begat schism. In breaking away from the Catholic Church, on conscientious grounds, they had established a precedent, the validity of which it was hard for them to deny if any serious dispute arose amongst themselves. Three secessions followed close upon each other and materially weakened their numbers. In 370, the Rogatists, as the followers of Rogatus of Cartenna were called, separated from the main body. In 380 the excommunication of Tyconius, the solitary philosopher belonging to this sect, was invested with an importance due to his high character and abilities. In 393, the action of Primian, Donatist bishop of Carthage, caused a serious quarrel, which resulted in the formation of a new sect, called after their bishop, Maximianists.

It was not however merely through loss of numbers that these divisions harmed the Donatists. Far more damaging were the opportunities they afforded to the Catholics of criticizing the mutual relations of the various parties. In 394, at a great Donatist council held at Bagai, the Primianists had solemnly excommunicated the Maximianists and decreed persecution against them. But this was beyond their power, and though great atrocities were committed when the Primianists were strong, they were forced to leave unmolested and even to recognise some of the leaders of the Maximianists. This opportunist policy put into the hands of St Augustine a double-edged weapon which he was far too skilled a dialectician to neglect. Again and again he comments on the inconsistency of the party of no compromise in compromising with their

opponents[1]; again and again he asks why the Primianists repudiate the Orders of the Catholics and acknowledge those of the Maximianists; again and again he urges the State to mete out to the Donatists the same measure of persecution as they had measured to their enemies[2]. It was not without success that St Augustine threw himself heart and soul into the fray. His trenchant criticisms were unanswerable and he gained many converts. The sight of three separate sects, each bitterly hostile to the others and each boasting that they alone were free from guilt as "traditores," must have awakened disquieting thoughts amongst all the best of the Donatist party. The prestige of the schism was lost; its political support was gone; it had to rely solely on its own inherent merits in contending against the policy of mingled severity and conciliation which St Augustine was now to organize.

One further point about the Donatists is worth noticing; they afford an illustration of the turning of evil into good by the Almighty Hand of God. Donatism was deeply tinged with those national and social sympathies which were peculiarly suited to the Moorish temperament. The violence and blind ferocity of the Circumcelliones stamp them as having within their ranks a large number of barbarians without a trace of civilization, and the sect seems to have been especially supported by Firmus and Gildo, the Moorish leaders. Moreover when it was crushed and driven from the more cultivated plains, it lingered on among the mountains of Numidia and Mauritania for nearly

[1] *Epp.* 51, 53, 70. [2] *Ep.* 93.

two centuries. With all its illogicality and all its excesses there was something in Donatism which appealed especially to the Moors. It attracted those whom the purer and more regulated teachings of Catholicism could not reach; it spread the Gospel of Christ amongst tribes beyond the ken of civilization, and it was the first teacher of those who were to preserve their faith through centuries of Mahommedan persecution. Viewed in this way Donatism would seem not the weakening of African Christianity, but the very means which under the guiding hand of God first spread and then strengthened for years of trial the Kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

The Golden Age of the African Church.

The thirty years between the fall of Gildo and the Vandal invasion cover the most prosperous period in the history of the African Church and are inseparably bound up with the acts of one great man. St Augustine of Hippo, though bishop of a provincial town of the Roman Empire, by the sheer force of his character and intellect not only restored the supremacy to the Catholic Church in Africa, but exercised an almost unbounded influence upon Western Christendom. In Africa he was not only the fearless opponent of all schism and heresy, whether Donatism, Pelagianism or Manichaeism, but the patriotic inspirer of a strenuous resistance to both Moorish and Vandal attacks. His influence in the Church, unequalled in his own age, has hardly diminished in the course of centuries. While he lived his authority was admitted by all, and he stirred up the Church to resist the heresies of Pelagius; after his death his writings retained their original value, and to this day are reckoned amongst the noblest contributions to Christian literature. He was fortunate in the period in which he lived, but he used his opportunities

thoroughly and well. He was consecrated A.D. 391, three years before the restoration of Roman authority in Africa, and he died two years after the arrival of the Vandals; but, with the exception of these five years, the days of his episcopate were on the whole a time of tranquillity for the province. But though the state of secular affairs was as quiet as could be expected under the failing emperors, there were many enemies for the ecclesiastical leaders to meet. Against all these St Augustine waged a bitter war, and the restoration alike of orthodoxy and organization to the African Church in 428 was almost entirely due to his efforts.

In 398 the tyranny of Gildo came to an end and a temporary prosperity was given to the province. Under Gildo and Firmus, its two Moorish leaders, Africa had been steadily falling into great disorder. For twelve years licentiousness and rapine had unbridled sway. To possess wealth or a beautiful wife was to be marked out for oppression; to refuse the tyrant's demands was to court certain and cruel death. False accusations or treacherous hospitalities removed all who opposed the despot, and their widows were forced to become his slaves and dancing-girls or to marry some Berber courtier. The very *coloni* were not safe in their obscurity, and the greed of Gildo and his favourites turned many out of their ancestral farms[1].

Meanwhile Donatism triumphed on every side, over Catholicism, enlisting in its ranks all the religious, social and economic discontent of the province. At one time the schismatics seemed destined to become the

[1] Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico*, 166, etc.

only religious body in Africa. Their organization spread like a net over the whole province ; in every village they had a priest, in every town a bishop, and in the uncivilized border districts they were exceptionally strong. Whole congregations with their priests deserted Catholicism and the new doctrines had a peculiar fascination for the young. There was even a real fear that it would be impossible to keep up the numbers of the orthodox priesthood, and an appeal was made to Milan and Rome to fill the vacancies in the ranks of the higher clergy[1].

However a change soon came. The power of Gildo crumbled into dust at the first touch and the supremacy of Rome in temporal matters was at once restored. To restore Catholic authority in spiritual affairs was much more difficult, and many years elapsed before the mass of the provincials returned to the bosom of the true Church.

The attack upon Donatism was twofold, and both the secular and ecclesiastical authorities did their best to stamp out the pestilent schism. For the Roman official regarded the followers of Donatus as much more than fanatical partisans in an obscure disciplinary dispute. He feared them as determined supporters of the national movement amongst the Moors. He saw that they were the opponents of established order, who were sometimes guilty of the wildest acts of anarchy and violence. Debtors and runaway slaves, half civilised Moors and dissolute women, wandered in bands throughout the country, exacting money and destroying

[1] Council of Carthage, 401. Aug., *Ep.* 61.

property wherever they went. The Catholics especially were the mark for their violence; and, where the Donatists were strong, neither life nor wealth was secure to those who differed from them. In some quiet spot, far removed from the protection of the soldiers, a wild horde of Circumcelliones would suddenly appear and all would be confusion and bloodshed. The granaries were burnt; the wine and vinegar were wasted; the farmers were forced with blows to grind their corn at the mill, and all who dared to resist were beaten to death with cudgels. Against the Catholics still greater outrages were committed. Their churches were destroyed, their sacred vessels were profaned, and their clergy were blinded with lime or tortured and slain[1].

No doubt the more respectable Donatists had no share in these brutalities and were unable to check them, but the civil officials were either unable or unwilling to distinguish between the two sections of the party, and classed both as enemies of the Empire. In truth the possession of Africa and the security of her fields were absolute necessities for the Imperial City, and no emperor could view with equanimity the growing anarchy of the province. As soon then as Gildo was crushed Honorius issued an edict proscribing the whole sect and ordaining death as the punishment of all who violated the churches or molested the priests of the Catholics. From this time onwards the policy of the State was firmly defined. Donatism and all its followers were condemned, and were always liable to the most rigorous punishments at the hands of the secular authorities.

[1] Aug., *Ep.* 185, *et passim.*

The theological attack upon the schismatics was just as determined; and was directed and led by St Augustine. The success of the Catholics was practically complete, and the gradual defeat of the Donatists is clearly shewn by the changes in the policy adopted by the Church. At first St Augustine, though unshaken in his resolution to overcome the schism, evidently feels a marked respect for his opponents. He sees that he is dealing with a party as strong as his own, and that confidence in his own position and argumentative skill are his only weapons. He invites Proculeianus to a conference, and will, if his adversary prefers it, stand aside himself in favour of a less redoubtable Catholic[1]. He actually held a discussion with the Donatist Bishop Fortunius at Tibursi, and contended by letters with Bishop Honoratus and the priest Crispinus; moreover, when the latter was consecrated to the see of Calama, he shewed an eagerness to resume their long controversy[2].

For St Augustine did not shut his eyes to obvious facts, and he saw that apart from all other considerations Donatism was a great power and must be treated accordingly. The influence of the sect was immense and on all neutral points its friendship was well worth gaining. He therefore complained bitterly of the damage done to religion and morality by the laxity with which the schismatics received men smarting under the censures of the Catholic Church, and quoted particular instances. A son who had beaten his mother, a sub-deacon and some nuns whom he had sentenced

[1] Aug., *Epp.* 33—5. [2] Aug., *Ep.* 51.

to penance, were freely admitted to the ranks of the Donatists, and all order was thereby endangered. It would be far better, he urged, if some arrangement was adopted by the two parties and each agreed to carry out the just censures imposed by its opponents or any who came over to its side. He had himself always done so, and could cite cases in which he had protected Donatists in spite of insults and contumely. Thus he had saved the daughter of a catechumen from a beating by her angry father for joining the schismatics, submitting to rebaptism, and becoming a nun; and on the other hand he had not sought to avenge the gross insults he had received from the Donatists[1].

This semi-recognition of his opponents was still preserved by St Augustine, even when the general drift of his policy towards them was completely changed. For as soon as the authority of the emperors was re-established in Africa, the tide turned and the Catholics began to rapidly recover power. As they saw themselves growing steadily stronger they assumed a more triumphant tone, while they managed to keep the door open for the schismatics' return. The first intimation of their altered policy is given in the correspondence of St Augustine, probably written in 400. He has learned now that something more than moral suasion is necessary, and he urges Celer, an important official, who had himself come over from the Donatists, to use greater vigour against his old associates[2]. In the next year he wrote to Pammachius, a Numidian of senatorial rank, thanking him for compelling his tenants

[1] Aug., *Ep.* 35. [2] *Epp.* 56—7.

to see the error of their ways, and remarking that the most important matter for consideration was the manner in which the Donatist clergy were to be received[1].

The great bishop contributed greatly to the solution of this problem by frankly acknowledging the ecclesiastical standing of his adversaries, and thereby smoothing the path of return. The policy adopted by the Council of Carthage in 401 followed certain broad lines. The Donatists were schismatics, not heretics, and there was no reason why the Orders and Baptism conferred by them should not be acknowledged: in the same way, if any Donatist had taken vows of chastity or self-denial, he should not be released on joining the Catholic communion[2]. St Augustine himself received and recognized the schismatically-ordained deacons, but he sternly refused to palliate in any way the crime of those Catholic deacons who had left the true fold of the Church.

These wise and salutary measures were too successful in winning Donatists to the Church to allow Catholics to dream of calling in the assistance of the secular arm. St Augustine proposed to alter the penalty of death decreed against all heretical and Donatist clergy to the infliction of a fine of ten pounds of gold, and urged a more rigorous enforcement of the law in the parts where the Circumcelliones were strong. His scheme was laid before the Emperor by the Council of 401, and might have been adopted, if further outbreaks, and one outrage in particular, had not occurred before the arrival of the deputation at Rome. Maxi-

[1] *Ep.* 58. [2] *Ep.* 61.

mianus, Bishop of Bagai, had excited the anger of the Donatists by successfully claiming from them in the law-courts the basilica of Fundus Calvianus. He was set upon in the church itself, beaten with cudgels and brands, torn from the altar, stabbed in the groin, dragged along the ground and abandoned for dead. The Catholics found him and bore him away, but as the sad procession proceeded on its way singing psalms it was assaulted and the senseless prelate once more seized by his enemies. He was then carried to the summit of a lofty tower and thrown over, but luckily he fell softly (*molliter*) upon a heap of refuse, where he lay until a chance passer-by heard his groans and took him by night to his friends. In spite of his wounds he recovered, but the fresh scars, more in number than the members of his body[1], bore witness to the treatment he had received[2]. This outrage urged the Emperor to increased rigour, and the Church also soon saw the necessity of more severity, for the Council of Carthage of 404 requested the energetic enforcement of the law of Theodosius against heretics.

St Augustine furnishes the best defence of this change of policy[3]. He instances the horrible brutalities of the Circumcelliones, and roundly asserts that "perhaps the cruelties of the barbarians would be light in comparison." He declares that these fanatics were pledged to subvert the social order of the province, that they repudiated just debts and released legal slaves. Their conduct deprived them of all claim to the consideration due to those who had honestly made a mistake. If they

[1] "plures in ejus corpore cicatrices quam membra numerantur."

[2] Aug., *Epp.* 88, 185, vii. 25—7.

[3] *Epp.* 70, 51, 53, 106.

were really conscientious in their opposition to the Catholics, why did they tolerate the Maximianists? The alleged grievances against both were identical, yet the Donatists refused to acknowledge Catholic Orders and Sacraments whilst admitting the validity of those dispensed by the Maximianists. Such a policy shewed the real hollowness of the whole dispute from a theological standpoint, and made it impossible to avoid the conviction that party spirit had more to do with its persistence than love of truth.

For if they were truly actuated by love of truth, why, urged Augustine, had they refused the offers of a friendly conference, which had been continually urged upon them previously, and even renewed so lately as 403[1]? Then Possidius and Augustine had offered to meet in argument any champions whom their party might select, but Primian, the Donatist Bishop of Carthage, had refused. Let things therefore take their course. Now the time for peaceful methods was past and the time for 'wholesome medicine' had begun[2]. After all it was no more than the Donatists had wished to inflict on their own friends, the Maximianists[3]; and not more than they had asked Constantine to enforce against their opponents the Catholics. Besides, the door of return was always held open to them and full recognition was granted to their baptism and orders.

The downfall of Donatism now begins. It was impossible for the schismatics long to resist the persecution of the government, aided as it was by the noble and statesmanlike policy of the Church in offering

[1] See also *Epp.* 87, 8. [2] *Ep.* 93. [3] *Ep.* 88.

an easy way for the retraction of their errors. There is no need to describe in detail the progress of the Church or to go fully into the mad outbreaks of the despairing Circumcelliones; it will be sufficient to mention briefly the chief landmarks of the great change.

In 405, Honorius issued his new edict at the request of the Council of Carthage of the preceding year. All those who ill-treated the Catholics were to be fined; the Donatist bishops and clergy were to be banished; rebaptism was forbidden, and those who submitted to it were to lose their goods and their churches and were deprived of the right of testamentary disposition. Moreover, schismatics were now authoritatively classed with heretics. The result was immediate. Many waverers came over, and open union took place between the majority of the Donatists and the Catholics in many great cities, notably at Carthage. Of course there were outbreaks of violence amongst the Circumcelliones, and especially in the neighbourhood of Hippo and in Numidia; and Augustine had to warn the new "magister officiorum" of the danger in which all the Catholics stood, and urged him to make it known that the strong measures taken were initiated not by Stilicho, but by the Emperor himself[1].

In 411, a great Conference was held at Carthage. The bishops on each side were to attend in their full strength, and seven champions for each party aided by seven bishops were to argue the points in dispute. The speeches were to be officially taken down, and at the end of the third day the President, the Proconsul

[1] Aug., *Ep.* 97.

Marcellinus, was to deliver his decision. However the Donatists, knowing the weakness of their cause, prevented any reasonable discussion by their characteristic violence. The first two days were completely wasted through frivolous objections raised to the formal preliminaries. On the third day, after a stormy argument on the question of the inclusion or exclusion of sinners from the Church on earth, the President's authority forced the conference into the practical channel of the historical causes of the schism. Then at length Marcellinus was able to deliver judgment. He began by declaring first, that the official 'acta' proved that Caecilian had not been guilty of giving up the Scriptures; secondly that, even if he had, his sin would not, according to the Divine Law, involve all his followers in his own guilt. Therefore the Donatists were pronounced to have no justification whatever, either historical or theological. They must then break up their organization and seek readmission to the Church, which they had deserted and oppressed. At any rate, they must surrender their churches, and cease from their outrages, and, while anyone was at liberty to break up a Donatist meeting, the Catholics were not to be impeded in any way.

An appeal to the Emperor on the part of the defeated faction was worse than useless, and only brought further penalties on their head. All Donatists were to lose their rights of citizenship, and in extreme cases, even their goods and lands. From this moment Donatism ceased to be a power in Africa and the rest of its history is the story of its death.

Augustine by his sermons converted the people

of Cirta[1], and by a fresh edict, published in 414, even those churches, which the Donatists still retained, were forfeited, the schismatic priests were banished, the fines on all who remained doubled, and the right to give evidence in the law-courts was taken away. In fact the Donatists were now reduced to the social position of the lowest class and were subjected to a slow, galling persecution, which was more effective from the fact that the sufferers were denied the advantage of posing in public as martyrs. It is not surprising to find that a special Council had to be summoned at Carthage in 418, to put upon a sounder basis the policy of the Church towards these enforced recruits[2].

But though Donatism was now completely stamped out in the greater part of the Province, some remnants still remained to cause the Church much more trouble. About 408, St Augustine had informed Vincentius, the Rogatist Bishop of Cartenna, in justification of his harsh policy, that much of Numidia had been won over[3], and in 423 he told Pope Caelestius that his success had made it necessary to set up a separate bishopric at Fussala[4]. But for all that the conversion was never completed, and on the borders, in the debateable land, which stretched beyond the strict limits of the Roman frontiers, Donatism still lingered. In 417, Pope Boniface sought information about this troublesome sect, and St Augustine in his reply declared that if vast numbers of the population have returned to Catholicism, a tough and turbulent minority remained outside. Some had conformed through fear

[1] *Ep.* 144. [2] Aug., "*Ad Donatistas post Collationem.*"
[3] *Ep.* 93. [4] *Ep.* 209.

of punishment, and some of those who had not conformed had been convinced of their errors; but there was still grave fear that the outrages would be renewed by those who had proved themselves more obstinate or more courageous[1].

But though there was this fear, and though individuals might still suffer from the excesses of the wilder schismatics, Donatism as a dangerous force was dead. By the end of St Augustine's life nothing was left of this once powerful sect but a few followers in the deserts of Mauritania and Numidia. They existed for many centuries and gave some trouble in later times; but regarded as a factor in the extinction of African Christianity they are quite unimportant.

Donatism was not the only trouble of the African Church at this period. Two heresies attacked the faith of the Catholics at the beginning of the fifth century and called for the most vigilant resistance. Happily Augustine of Hippo and Aurelius of Carthage were fully alive to the danger and were able to prevent the people of the Province from being led astray. Consequently these heresies had no influence upon the fall of the African Church and may be dismissed with a very few words.

In 409, Pelagius, the author of the teaching which bears his name, landed in Africa and began to preach his erroneous doctrines about original sin and free-will. The peculiarities of the African national character promised to afford him a most favourable ground on which to sow his seed. For Pelagius, and still more his

[1] *Ep.* 185, vii. 30.

friend Caelestius, taught the absolute self-sufficiency of the human will[1]. The Africans, in spite of their luxuriousness, paid to personal piety and ascetic austerity the most exaggerated honour, and it was the very ideal of self-denial which "contributed very largely to sustain and deepen that strong conviction of the freedom of the human will, which the Catholic Church has always so strenuously upheld[2]."

At first the new doctrines made rapid headway and gained many converts[3], but the firm stand of the responsible heads of the Church quickly checked their spread. The Council of Carthage of 412 condemned Caelestius and his tenets, and St Augustine argued and preached against all whom he had deceived. With his personal charm, persuasive eloquence and dialectical skill, the great bishop met the arguments of the heretics, answered the doubts of the waverers, and proved how contrary to Scripture and experience the new doctrines were[4]. In 418, the Council of Carthage, at which over 200 prelates were present, formulated nine canons against the Pelagians, and the censures of the Church were supported and enforced by the edicts issued in the same year by the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius[5]. When Pope Zosimus sent out against the heretics an "epistola tractaria," com-

[1] Augustine, *De Gestis Pelag.*, §§ 5—8.

[2] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, ii. 123.

[3] Aug., *De Gestis Pelag.*, § 62, "cum plurimo decepisset, et fratres, quos non deceperat conturbaret," and the same author says (*Ep.* 157, § 22), "nesciam quo sint erupturi."

[4] See especially *De Pecc. Meritis*, *De Spiritu Litteraque*, *De Gestis Pelagii*, *De Natura et Gratia*, and *Sermons* 170, 174—5.

[5] Isidorus Hispal. Chron., *Honorio et Theodesio Minore.*

manding all bishops to sign it under pain of deprivation[1], though in Italy no less than eighteen proved recalcitrant, in Africa hardly any were found tainted with the Pelagian errors. Indeed, so anxious was Aurelius that the orthodoxy of the Province might be proved, that he wrote to all his suffragans and begged them to subscribe the declaration, however excellent their reasons for refusing to do so might appear to them to be[2].

But the Church of Carthage was not content with acting in self-defence; it pursued its enemy wherever he went. Both in Palestine and Italy Pelagius found the Africans his most bitter foes. It was Orosius, the friend, if not the envoy of Augustine, whose strictures of the new doctrine caused the assembling of the synods of Jerusalem and Diospolis at which the accusers of Pelagius were inspired by the writings of the great Bishop of Hippo. It was the Council of Carthage of 416 which urged on Pope Innocent I. to condemn Pelagianism, and it was the series of African synods and especially the Carthaginian "obtestatio" of 418, which opened the eyes of Zosimus to the dangers of this error[3]. As long as it seemed likely that the heresy would spread the African bishops opposed it might and main. They stamped it out in their own land; they discredited it before the eyes of the world, and thanks to their efforts, its later history is to be found in the annals of the Churches of Gaul alone.

[1] Apud August., *Ep.* 190.

[2] Aurel. Carth., *Ep.*: *Epistola Episcopis Provinc. Byzacenae.*

[3] Aug., *Ep.* 215.

The other heresy which now affected Africa was the far more subtle Manichaeism. Its converts did not openly separate themselves from the orthodox, but gave secret meanings to their acts while participating in the ordinary public worship. It was therefore particularly hard to combat and gained an alarming number of votaries. Africa, indeed, seemed to be from the fourth century the principal seat of the sect[1]; St Augustine himself had been won over as a young man, and he had erred in company with great multitudes—"cives et peregrini Christiani, tam catholici quam etiam Donatistae[2].' Even when there was a reluctance to join the sect, an uneasy feeling that its teaching might after all be true made many become "auditores," in order to gain such help as the "electi" could give in the life beyond the grave[3].

Manichaeism however suffered under the grievous disability of being obnoxious to the temporal authorities, whether Christian or pagan. A grave suspicion of the grossest dissoluteness, which has never been justified as regards the sect considered as a whole, continually hung over it and caused the issue of frequent edicts against it. Diocletian in 287, Valentinian in 372, Theodosius in 382, proscribed all who adopted its tenets. The efforts of the State were supported by those of the Church. St Augustine wrote and argued against it and was perhaps able to check its progress[4]. Still it was never rooted out of Africa, and Manichaeans were found there as long as the power of Rome was acknowledged in the Province. On the arrival of the

[1] Neander IV., 497, *et seq.*
[2] Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, vi.
[3] Art., *Encycl. Britan.*
[4] Possidius, vi.

Vandals, many of its proselytes fled to Italy and caused Pope Leo the Great the utmost anxiety[1]. Hunneric found the Arian clergy tainted by its doctrines and ordered their exile or execution at the stake[2]. When Justinian reconquered the Province, a fresh edict was hurled against the heretics in 540, and even in the time of the Saracens many Africans believed in their teachings[3]. In fact from the fourth century onwards Manichaeism was widely spread through the Churches of Africa; its secrecy saved it from extinction and it existed as long as the strictest orthodoxy itself.

Although on the whole these thirty years seemed a period of prosperity, and although the position of the Church in 428 was far stronger than in 398, there was one danger which became more pressing every year as the time went on. It threatened, not only the Church, but the whole fabric of the Roman power, and it was felt not only in Africa but wherever the Imperial eagles flew. On every frontier of the Empire the barbarians continually advanced, and it was during these years that the Berber forces began to make headway against the garrison of Africa. It was not indeed a new peril. It had always been there and was inseparable from the condition of affairs in Africa. As far back as the time of Cyprian, the Moors had proved their power. They had advanced as far as the range of Ferratus and fixed their permanent boundaries there. From the security of inaccessible mountain retreats, they issued to plunder and ravage the fertile plains. The settlers were carried off and held to ransom;

[1] Sermon, xv.

[2] Victor Vit. ii. 1.

[3] Greg. II., *Ep.* 124.

travellers were stopped, robbed and sometimes murdered; and the scattered Roman posts and the militia or "limitanei" could do little to make the border secure. At one time the Moors had seized Christians from eight different Sees, to rescue whom St Cyprian raised a subscription of eight hundred pounds of gold from the people of Carthage. The revolts of Firmus and Gildo had been national movements towards independence, and the Moors, foiled in these attempts, harassed the masters, whom they could not overcome.

The circumstances of the time gave them many opportunities. The Empire of the West was tottering to its fall, and the great proconsuls of the provinces were impatient of their subjection to Rome. Heraclian, Count of Africa from 409 to 413, though he had resisted the temptations of Attalus, threw off his allegiance to Honorius and invaded Italy itself; when, as the chronicler tersely says, he lost his honour and his life. Ten years later another pretender arose in the Province. John claimed the throne left vacant by Honorius and tried to conquer Africa, which Boniface held in the interests of Valentinian III. and his mother, Galla Placidia. Finally Boniface himself revolted and defended himself successfully against the combined force and fraud of Mavortius, Galbio and Sinex. He had after this to wage war with Sigisvult and seems in desperation to have summoned the aid of the Vandals from across the sea[1].

The Moorish tribes, always turbulent and hard to repress, must have been blind indeed, if they had not

[1] Prosper, s. a., 416, 427—8, 431, and article in *English Historical Review*, July, 1887, by Prof. Freeman.

seen in the disloyalty and quarrels of the Counts of Africa exceptional opportunities for pillage and rapine. St Augustine's letters shew that they did not let their chances slip[1]. They made their usual incursions with more than their usual audacity and success. Thus in November, 409, they raided Sitifis and carried off a professed virgin, the daughter of Bishop Severus. Happily for her, her three captors were restored to health in answer to her prayers; and either through the national reverence for one endowed with supernatural powers or through sheer gratitude, they restored her unharmed to her friends[2].

The history of the barbarian inroads is bound up with the story of one great man. Boniface, Count of Africa, had passed nearly the whole of his official life in Africa and had gained his great position by his valour and skill. A friend of the Church, he had won the praise of St Augustine by finding time in the midst of his military duties to inquire concerning the character and origin of Donatism[3]. In an age of the utmost corruption, he was noted for his honesty; no bribe could move him, and he administered a rough but efficient justice. As a frontier officer he was unrivalled; with a few "foederati" he kept his district secure and he fearlessly attacked the Moors wherever he met them whether his forces were many or few, and even when he was alone[4]. In fact for many years under his rule the Province was kept clear of barbarian foes.

On the death of his wife Boniface seriously medi-

[1] *Ep.* 109, § 7. [2] Aug., *Ep.* 111. [3] Aug., *Ep.* 185.
[4] Olympiodorus, *frag.* 42, F. H. G. p. 67.

tated resigning his military command and retiring for the remainder of his days into the holy calm of a monastery; but St Augustine, whom he consulted, disapproved of the scheme and persuaded him that his duty to his country demanded that he should continue to carry out the work he had so well begun. In 422, he was made Count of Africa, and granted the rank of 'Vir Spectabilis.' Whether these new honours turned his head, or the new family ties which he now formed by his second marriage with an Arian wife disturbed his balance, is uncertain, but from this time forward his whole life underwent a great change. Led astray by his new wife, the friend of St Augustine even allowed his daughter by this second marriage to receive heretical baptism. Moreover there were dark reports abroad that, throwing all continence aside, he had been guilty of the grossest immorality.

Such a falling away as this had its usual effects, and not only Boniface but all Africa suffered for his crimes. His lapse from loyalty has already been noticed, and now a strange sloth possessed him. His old vigour and courage were no more; he, who as a tribune could drive back the Moors, could as a count do nothing to save the Province; on every side the barbarian hordes ravaged as they pleased, and the once great leader busy with loose living took no steps to ward off disaster[1].

It is perhaps unfair to put all the blame for the disorganization of the Province upon the shoulders of Boniface. No doubt he was very slack in the perform-

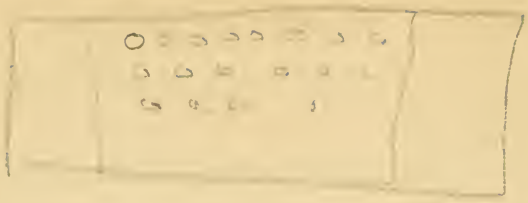
[1] Aug., *Ep.* 220.

ance of his duties and could have done much more to defend his charge if he had continued in his old life of virtue; but at the same time the advance of the Moors was inevitable, and the military system of the Empire was not well fitted for a stout resistance. The climate of Africa is very unsuitable for Northern races and sooner or later the vigour of Europeans is always sapped and the strength enervated by its effect upon them. It was therefore a mistake to post one legion permanently in the Province, as the Legio Tertia Augusta had been for centuries. If they became inefficient, the lowlands were left practically defenceless to the mercy of the Moors; for neither the *Foederati* nor the *Limitanei*, mere militia, could ever have been very formidable, while the moribund state of the Western Empire prevented any help from other regions being sent to the distressed Africans.

Still, as has been said, these thirty years were a time of prosperity for the Church. Though the Berbers were ever advancing, the Church as an organization was not affected, and if the frontiers were disturbed the heart of the Province was not yet attacked. In other ways the cause of the Catholics had distinctly progressed. Donatism, its great rival, had suffered a fall—as complete as it was sudden. Its property was confiscated, its ministers exiled, and its supporters outlawed; and the sect, that had seemed once about to crush out the Catholics altogether, had been reduced to the position of a small struggling remnant in the outlying districts of the less-civilized provinces. Against other dangers the Church had held its own. Pelagianism had lost what footing it had in Africa, and the

subtle Manichaeism had been forced to hide itself from the eye of all authority.

The Church might therefore look back with satisfaction on thirty years of advance since the fall of Gildo. Mercifully, perhaps, her great leaders were not allowed to foresee the fierce persecution with which it was to meet at the hands of a new and terrible foe.



CHAPTER IV.

The Rise of the Vandals.

The thirty years of peace through which the Church had just passed were in 428 brought to an abrupt close by the outbreak of a tremendous storm. Just as the triumphs of St Augustine seemed to have won for the Catholics the undisputed mastery of the Province, and to have secured a long and useful career for the triumphant Church, the sudden appearance of an unexpected danger reduced her once more to the position of a proscribed and persecuted society. In 428, the Vandals crossed from Spain and held Africa for more than a hundred years. To them, both as Arians, and as enemies of Rome, the Church was doubly obnoxious, and they treated her with as much harshness as their political circumstances and the smallness of their numbers permitted. Hardly at any time tolerated, she was at certain periods and in certain places subjected to the most barbarous persecution.

The exact cause which brought about the invasion of Africa need concern the ecclesiastical historian but little. He may believe what Procopius says of the treacherous fraud of Aetius and the short-sighted folly

of Boniface[1], or he may with the modern critic say that the Count of Africa added treachery to his other crimes, and, moved by a petty feeling of jealousy, deliberately invited the enemies of his country and his faith to share with him the province entrusted to his care[2]. However this may be, in 428[3] the Vandals and Alans crossed the Straits of Gibraltar with the evident intention of conquering Africa. Their leader Gaiseric was peculiarly fitted for the task before them. He was a brave warrior and astute statesman, and was fully aware that a strong hand was needed to maintain his authority amongst the Vandals. Though of diminutive stature and lame, owing to a fall from his horse, he was terrible in anger and proof against every fatigue. He loved war for its own sake, and to the end of his life kept the shores of the Mediterranean in dread of his piratical expeditions. Great statesman as he proved himself, he affected recklessness enough when embarked on a marauding expedition. If his sailors asked him at the beginning of one of these cruises in what direction they were to steer, he would order them to sail before the wind against those "with whom God was angry." Yet in his administration and diplomacy Gaiseric shewed that he could employ the utmost vigilance and caution. Though an apostate from Catholicism, he tempered the hatred of the renegade with the wisdom of the

[1] Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico*, i. 3.

[2] Freeman, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, July, 1887.

[3] I have adopted in the main the chronology of Mr Hodgkin for this period. The authorities on which it is founded are cited in a masterly note in Volume II. of his "*Italy and her Invaders.*"

statesman. Though a barbarian conqueror, he was willing to keep the best part of Roman civilization. Silent and watchful, he was ready to seize every advantage that diplomacy offered, and was practised in sowing the seeds of enmity amongst his opponents[1].

Under such a leader any foe would have been dangerous; the Vandals were almost irresistible. A tall, fair people, sprung from a race which had defeated the best legionaries of the youthful Empire, the degenerate colonists of the provinces were no match for them. Salvian may have exaggerated the luxury and vice of the provincials and the stern simplicity of the barbarians, but it is impossible entirely to reject his testimony that the collapse of the Roman power was due to the superior discipline and morality of the invaders[2].

The geographical features and political organization of the Province were in favour of the Vandals. The part of Africa where they landed was the place best fitted strategically for an invading host. Mauritania Tingitana was never closely connected with the rest of the Province, and in later times it was found more convenient to administer it from Spain than Carthage. The barren mountain ranges prevented the formation of roads, and communications between Gades and Numidia were only possible by sea. But the very desolation and inaccessibility of the region fitted it for

[1] For Gaiseric's character see Procop., *De Bell. Vand.*, i. 3; Jordanes, *De Rebus Geticis*, c. 33; Isidor. Hispal., *Hist. Vand.*, c. 74.

[2] Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, v. 14, vii. 27—9, 65, etc. He speaks of the Vandals as "ignavissimi," which seems at least an exaggeration.

the purposes of the Vandals, who needed at first no permanent home, but a base of operations, where they could safely leave their wives and children while they themselves overran the more fertile plains. From the Moorish tribes there was little to fear. Their one idea was hatred of the Roman provincial and love of his goods, and it must have been easy for a skilled diplomatist like Gaiseric to gain their friendship by the promise of the plunder of the rich eastern lowlands.

The complicated machinery of the provincial government prevented a prompt attack of the invaders. According to the regular system of the Empire, all power should have been vested in the Vicarius Africae under the supervision of the Praetorian Prefect; but by a curious exception his authority was limited to the Mauritania, Numidia, Byzacene and Tripoli, while Zeugitana, the most important district of all and the centre of the whole Province, was under the separate rule of the Proconsul of Africa. Both these officials lived at Carthage, and as their authority continually clashed considerable jealousy and ill-feeling existed between them. To make confusion worse confounded, only the civil power was under this dual control; the direction of military affairs throughout Africa was vested in the Comes Africae, who took no orders except from the Praetorian Prefect of Italy[1]. With such a medley of authorities it would have been very wonderful if the defence of the Province had been well directed, and it may be supposed that the discords of the great Roman officials had much to do with the rapid fall of the Imperial power.

[1] Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, Vol. II. p. 242.

For the Vandals became masters of Africa within a very short time. Landing in A.D. 428, they were practically supreme throughout the Province by the fall of Carthage in 439. After this the war passed out of its acute stage and merely lingered on. In 442 a final peace was made and a partition of territory with Valentinian III. agreed upon, despite which the Vandals continued to increase their dominions until the capture of Rome in 455 gave them the opportunity of reaching their furthest limits by the gradual occupation of Tripoli.

Within two years of the landing of the Vandals it is said that only three Churches were still in existence. Of these, the fate of Cirta is unknown; Hippo fell after a brave defence, and Carthage was captured by treachery[1]. Although Boniface soon discovered his mistake and tried with all his old courage to repair his errors, the invaders made rapid progress. In May, 430, Hippo was besieged, and St Augustine and many other bishops were shut up within its walls. Boniface himself conducted the defence with the Gothic "foederati," and for fourteen months fought so bravely that the Vandals marched away in despair. But long before the retreat of the foe the great Bishop of Hippo had passed to his rest. He was stricken with fever three months after the beginning of the siege, and on the 28th of August, 430, the Church, not only of Africa but of the whole world, suffered an irreparable loss by the death of the venerable prelate at the age of seventy-five[2]. It was well perhaps that the champion of ortho-

[1] Possidius, *Vita Sti. Aug. Ep.*, cc. 28—30.

[2] Victor Vit., I. 3.

doxy should not live to see the Church, which he had so manfully defended against schisms and heresies, at length subverted, as it seemed for ever, by a barbarian and heretical foe. We may hope that his last moments were cheered by a reconciliation with the brave soldier who had so sadly belied the hopes raised by his earlier career.

For a time the Vandals were checked, but their period of inactivity was brief. Boniface, encouraged by reinforcements from Rome and by the arrival of Aspar with help from the Eastern Empire, took the field, but was completely routed at the first encounter[1]. From this time the fate of Africa was sealed. Hippo was deserted by its inhabitants and burned by the Vandals, and the Romans were forced to make a truce with their successful foes. In 435 a peace was concluded between Gaiseric and Trigetius at Hippo. The conditions are not fully recorded, but it seems to have been stipulated that the Emperor should grant to the invaders a portion of Africa, in return for which the Vandals should pay tribute and give up Hunneric, the eldest son of their king, as a hostage for their good behaviour. Possibly the district thus given up consisted of the three Mauritanias, but of this there is no certainty. It is also likely that the barbarians undertook not to attack Carthage; for the unexpected capture of this city caused the greatest indignation amongst the other inhabitants of the Empire[2].

[1] Procopius, *De Bello Vand.*, i. 4.

[2] For this treaty vide Procop., *De Bell. Vand.*, i. 4; Prosper, s.a., 439; Prosper Tyro, *Canisii Ant. Lecti*, s.a. 435; Camiodnus, s.a. 12. Theodosius.

For the next few years the Africans were permitted by the policy of a conqueror the enjoyment of a period of cessation of active hostilities. Soon, however, the court of Ravenna seems to have been sufficiently misguided to allow Gaiseric's son, Hunneric, to return home. A rude awakening soon came[1]. On October 19th, 439, while the attention of Aetius was taken up with the affairs of Gaul, Gaiseric appeared before the walls of Carthage, and obtaining admission on the pretext of peace treacherously seized the city. War at once broke out again and lasted for three years. Now, however, the Romans had no chance of success, and there is no record of any fighting in Africa. The Vandals on the contrary began their career as the scourges of the Mediterranean by a descent on Sicily. In 440, Gaiseric invaded and ravaged the islands far and wide until recalled by the news of the arrival of Count Sebastian in Africa[2]. He however turned out to be a fugitive from Rome and not a Roman general. In 441, Theodosius II. sent from Constantinople a great armament of 1100 vessels under Areobindus, Anaxilla, Germanus and other leaders[3]; but this too ended in failure, and was the cause of more harm to Sicily than to Africa, its only result being that an embassy was sent by Gaiseric to the Eastern Emperor. This was the last attempt to drive out the Vandals. In the following year Valentinian was forced to agree to one

[1] Prosper, s.a. 443; Prosper Tyro, s.a. 445 (ed. Canis.), s.a. 439; Marcellinus Comes gives the date as 23 Oct. 439.

[2] Prosper, s.a. 444; Prosper Tyro (ed. Canis.), s.a. 440; Idatius, s.a. 26th of Theodosius II.

[3] Theorphanes, s.a. 441; Prosper, s.a. 445; Prosper Tyro, s.a. 441.

more province being torn from his crumbling Empire, and to sign a definite peace with Gaiseric.

Africa was divided according to "certain limits," and perhaps even Sicily was surrendered. Roughly speaking, the Vandals acquired Byzacene, Proconsularis and Numidia; the Empire kept the three Mauritanias and Tripoli[1]. That is to say, the invaders obtained all the fertile parts of the province; the Romans retaining only the thinly populated districts which on the death of Valentinian III. (in A.D. 455) were lost to the Empire[2]. Unfortunately for Africa neither side was equal to the task of obtaining the mastery. The Vandals were not sufficiently numerous to hold their territories effectually; the Empire was too weak to reconquer them. From this time therefore the Moors began to gain ground and to establish themselves in a position from which it proved impossible to dislodge them.

Thus then was Africa conquered by the Vandals. Putting aside their superiority in homogeneity, physique, morality and recklessness, it is worth while to consider

[1] Prosper, s.a. 446; Prosper Tyro, *Canis. Ant. Lect.*, s.a. 442; Cassiodorus, s.a. 19 Theodos.; Victor Vit., i. 4.

[2] Mauritania must in name at least have been kept by Valentinian. The Novels 23 (22 June, 445) and 37 Valentin. and Theodos. (13 July, 451) apply to it. It was probably never colonized by the Vandals. The epitaph of Novatus (*C. I. L.*, 8634) in the year 440 points to the establishment of comparative quiet then. Dr Hodgkin places the division of the province recorded by Victor Vitensis (i. 4) in 435. I prefer to follow Papencordt in assigning it to the final peace of 442; Victor mentions it after the Fall of Carthage in 439, and this surely proves that it could not have been arranged in 435. Marcus (*Histoire des Wandales*, iii. 1) and Tissot (II. ii. 1, § 7) make an additional truce in 432, but on no convincing evidence.

how far they were aided by disaffection within the province itself. Neither Moors nor Donatists had much cause to love the Roman *régime*, and there is no *prima facie* improbability in assuming that they threw in their lot with Gaiseric. Of these two possible allies, the part played by the latter is the more uncertain and has caused much difference of opinion amongst modern historians[1]. From the time of St Augustine to the reign of Pope Gregory II. nothing is known of them, and at first sight it appears unlikely that a sect which had repudiated Arianism[2] would side with the heretical Vandals. But the times were now altered and the Donatists of 428 were not the Donatists of 398. The wise policy of St Augustine, supported by the persecuting policy of the Roman government, had nearly destroyed the schismatical party. All the more respectable, all the enlightened and reasonable members of the sect had by this time rejoined the Catholic Church. The Circumcelliones alone remained obdurate, and it is easy to suppose that with them theological scruples were easily overcome by fanatical hate. Indeed as early as 417, the more violent Donatists had negociated with the Goths and professed themselves Arians for political reasons, though they were disowned by their more respectable brethren; and now, driven to despair by harsh treatment and with all their social grievances unredressed, they probably found no difficulty in once more proving complaisant and in sacrificing their creed for the sake of their revenge.

[1] Papencordt (pp. 284, 6) argues that they did not help the Vandals; Gibbon (chap. XIII.), Marcus (iii. 1), and Fournel (i. 2), maintain that they did.

[2] Aug., *Ep.* 185, § 1.

No contemporary historian, it is true, says that the Vandals were aided by the schismatics; on the other hand we have no remarks on either the persecution or the immunity of the Donatists. Probably they had by this time dropped out of sight, and though the few surviving Circumcelliones helped Gaiseric, they were confounded with the Moors, to whom they were so closely allied.

For there is little doubt that the barbarian tribes sided with the invaders. They had from the first hated the Romans, and the events of the last fifty years had made them despise them. They loved plunder for its own sake and were ever on the watch for opportunities to ravage the province. The appearance of the Vandals gave them a splendid chance, and they were far too valuable as allies to be overlooked by a skilled diplomatist like Gaiseric. A few years later Moorish contingents formed part of the piratical crews which ravaged the Mediterranean[1], and in all probability the presence of Berber and Vandal in the same army dates from the beginning of the conquest of Africa.

The ten years' war and the triumph of barbarism over civilization wrought havoc among the Roman settlements[2]. On all sides the advance of the invaders was marked by burning houses, ruined farms and reckless devastation. When Carthage fell, the senseless rage of the conquerors was turned against the mag-

[1] Victor Vit., i. 8.

[2] The authorities for the ravages of the Vandals are:—Victor Vitensis, i. 1—4; Possidius, *Vita S. Augusti*, c. 28; Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico*, i. 3—4.

nificent public buildings, and the peculiar hatred of the beautiful, which has given to the Vandals their evil reputation, now especially found vent. The Odeon, the theatre, and the temple of Memory perished utterly, nor did the Via Caelestis with its magnificent pavement and its carven pillars escape the hands of the destroyers[1].

The invaders knew no mercy, as long as the conquest was incomplete, and neither age nor sex protected the miserable provincials from their enemies. The very babes were snatched from their mothers' arms and hurled to the ground, and the only safety was in flight. The country districts were almost depopulated, and the wretched inhabitants hid in the caves and chasms of the mountains, only in many cases to meet a lingering death by hunger and thirst. When Carthage was taken, the fury of the Vandals had somewhat spent itself and less barbarity was shewn. There were not so many massacres, and the invaders sought rather to enrich themselves than to slay the citizens. To this end large numbers of the senators were imprisoned and tortured and compelled to give up all their gold, silver and precious stones. Many others, amongst whom were the grandparents of Bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe[2], fled, and if they left their property behind them, no obstacles seem to have been put in their way.

But the Vandals were more than mere barbarians, filled with insensate rage against the noblest works of civilization; Arians as they were, they were firmly attached to Christianity and deeply imbued with that stern military puritanism which so often appears in the Teu-

[1] See Prosper, *De Promissionibus*, ii. 38, for a description of the Via.

[2] *Vita S. Fulgentii*, c. 1.

tonic race. Perhaps even the destruction of the splendid buildings of Carthage was caused by their real or fancied connection with old pagan gods. At any rate the Catholic clergy provoked the worst feelings in the minds of the Arian invaders, who, regarding the vices of the orthodox provincials with loathing, especially marked them out for insult and massacre. They were believed to be the possessors of vast stores of concealed wealth, and fearful tortures were used to cause them to reveal it. Their mouths were held open with sticks and filled with loathsome filth; vile compounds of salt water, vinegar and the lees of wine were forced down their throats; cords twisted round their foreheads and legs cut into their flesh; and some, loaded with baggage like camels, were goaded on until they fell dead with exhaustion. | If overcome by their miseries, they did give up their possessions, they were tormented afresh to make them produce their hidden stores. Vast numbers were thus tortured, and Panpinian, a priest, and Mansuetus, Bishop of Urci, were burned to death. In all directions the clergy were driven out or slain: religious communities were broken up and many of the devout women were exposed to the grossest outrage and infamy. When the Vandals had done their worst to the Catholic clergy, they turned their attention to the churches. Every building set apart for the orthodox worship, the monasteries and burying places, were ravaged and laid waste without respect to their sacred character. Sacramental vessels and ecclesiastical vestments were taken and destroyed; the churches were set on fire, and if their strength defied the hosts of the despoilers, the doors were broken open,

the roofs were stripped off, the walls were defaced and only a desolate ruin was left. In Carthage the Arians took possession of the Church property, and either devoted it to their own worship or turned it into dwelling-houses for their priests[1].

In fact for a time the Catholics were entirely disorganized. In the first throes of their distress the clergy appealed to St Augustine through Bishop Honoratus to know whether they would be justified in leaving their flocks and flying to places of greater security. The great bishop replied that they must not shrink from any personal danger; if all were in peril, let clergy and laity flee together; but if the clergy alone were threatened, they must not desert their posts to seek their own safety[2]. But with all her devotion it was impossible for the Church to maintain her efficiency. In 431 Capreolus had to refuse an invitation to send delegates to the Third General Council at Ephesus, on the ground that the terrible devastations of the Vandals and their pressure on every side made it impracticable to summon a general synod in Africa[3].

Such is the picture drawn by the historians of the ravages of the Vandal invaders. But it is not clear that some of the colours are not unduly heightened by religious and national resentment. No Vandal writer ever arose to give a second account of the war, and there is much in the statements of Victor and Possidius to shew the need of caution in accepting their facts as literally true.

[1] Isodorus, *Hispalensis*, *Hist. Vand.*, c. 75; Prosper, s.a. 443.

[2] Possidius, *Vita S. Augusti.*, c. 28.

[3] Ruinart, *Hist. Persecu. Vand.*, iii. 2.

Though Victor asserts that the number of the clergy who were tortured was too great to be told, he mentions only two by name. Fuller particulars of the massacres related would be more convincing than vague denunciations; and besides, two or three statements of the same writer are almost incredible. In the first place he declares that the Vandals uprooted all the fruit-trees in order to prevent the fugitives obtaining food from them[1]. Now Gaiseric, as a statesman, who had come to Africa to provide a home for his people, cannot be believed to have allowed one of the chief sources of the wealth of the province to be destroyed in order to gratify a momentary passion. Probably at the first onset he sanctioned extensive ravages from motives of policy and with the idea of striking terror into the hearts of the Liby-Phoenician inhabitants. But when the marvellous remains of the Roman power are considered, and the rapid enervation of the Vandals through unaccustomed luxuries is remembered, it seems evident that the amount of devastation has been greatly exaggerated.

It is further asserted that the invaders were in the habit of hastening the surrender of well-defended towns, by slaying the prisoners and piling their putrefying bodies against the walls to cause disease amongst the garrison[2]. If resort was ever had to this device, its ingenuity was certainly admirable; but it is difficult to understand how it did not recoil upon its authors and involve besieged and besiegers alike in one dread infection. Perhaps, however, this statement may be due to Victor's uncritical mind, for if the

[1] Victor Vit., i. 1. [2] Victor Vit., i. 3.

bodies of the slain around the town caused pestilence, it does not follow that the Vandals deliberately neglected all sanitary precautions out of a fiendish policy of spreading disease.

But there is a curious anti-climax in Victor's complaints. After narrating the terrible devastation of the country, the wrecking of the churches, the massacre of the population and the tortures of the clergy, after telling of the fall of Carthage, the exile of its bishop and the confiscation of the basilicas, he asks how anyone can endure to relate without tears that the Catholics were forced to carry their dear ones in silence to the grave without the consolation of hymns[1]. From this it certainly seems probable that after the capture of Carthage at any rate the active persecution of the Church was not great.

The settlement of Africa by the Vandals confirms the impression—our facts justify nothing more—that the barbarity of the invaders has been painted in too glaring a hue. There was of course much individual hardship and much confiscation of property, but if the half-civilized state of the conquerors and the nature of the work they had to do are considered, it is evident that their measures were most politic and not unduly harsh. Gaiseric aimed at establishing his people in their new home, at securing them against domestic risings and assuring their enjoyment of all that was best of the land's produce. He did not wish to oppress the old inhabitants unnecessarily, and, once the settlement was complete, both in religious and

[1] Victor Vit., i. 5.

secular matters only prominent opponents suffered at his hands.

There was no attempt at depopulation. Indeed the numbers of the Vandals prevented any such scheme. Never a numerous people, when the conquest was over, they mustered barely fifty thousand able-bodied soldiers. When they landed they had only eighty thousand males, and this included not only the Alani but old men, infants and slaves[1]; nor did they reach even this nominal strength of eighty chiliarchies until they had intermarried with the Moors[2]. The utmost Gaiseric could hope to do was to make his people the dominant race in Africa, and in order to effect this the Berbers' encroachments had to be restrained and the old inhabitants held in subjection. As long as the great conqueror lived the first difficulty was easily met; the border tribes were forced or cajoled into alliance and it was only under his successors that the raids of the Moors gave any trouble.

The second danger was the greater. For the conquered race were indispensable to their conquerors. They tilled the soil and paid the taxes; they introduced their masters to comforts as yet unknown to them; their habits of business made them even necessary for the carrying on of the administration.

The Vandals seemed to conquer Africa; Africa really conquered the Vandals, and the history of the invaders during the next hundred years is the story of their gradual assimilation by those whom they had defeated. For not even Rome could surpass the delights of Carthage, and the seductive luxuries of the

[1] Victor Vit., i. 1. [2] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 5.

hot climate of Africa combined to overcome the stern simplicity of the northern barbarians. But for every luxury, which under the burning rays of the Libyan sun became a necessity of life, the Vandals were dependent upon the despised provincials, and had therefore to treat them with moderation and considerateness.

In the matter of government also the Africans had much to teach the Vandals. They had for centuries lived under the highly elaborated system of the Empire, which, with all its faults, was the best the world had yet experienced. The Vandals on the other hand had nothing more than the rude tribal organization common to all Teutonic peoples. Gaiseric, too able a statesman to destroy an instrument he could not replace, decided to continue the local administration on the lines laid down by Roman experience. To do this he needed trained officials, and his own warriors were quite unable to take the place of the Imperial staff. He was forced to employ the old officials, and had to trust to the aid of provincials to oppress their unfortunate fellow-countrymen. Many of the victims of Arian oppression were men occupying high positions in the civil service[1], and the decree of Hunneric against the Catholics keeps exactly the same list of officials and rank as it had when it was first drawn up a century before by Theodosius[2].

Still though the Vandals did not try to exterminate the old population, they provided themselves with estates from the conquered territories. A division of the provinces between the king and his followers

[1] Victor Vit., i. 14—18, etc.

[2] Compare Victor Vit., v. 12, and Theodos., *Cod.*, xvi. v. 48.

formed the basis of the settlement[1]. The greater part of Zeugitana, a small but very productive district round Carthage, known henceforth as the "Sortes Vandalorum," was granted to the two sons of Gaiseric and to the Vandals. Byzacene, Abaritana and Getulia, kept by the king as the royal demesne, were still inhabited by the old population. As the conquerors were unable to occupy all the lands, only the best estates were actually seized by them; but the former owners of these received no compensation and were reduced to the utmost poverty. Still they were not enslaved, but were free to depart to any place they wished, and were perhaps not much worse off than those who still kept their estates in the Sortes Vandalorum. For as the lands of the king and the Vandals paid no taxes, the whole expenses of government fell upon the old inhabitants. Nearly all the produce of the poorer farms was seized by the conquerors, and, as the wretched cultivators had barely enough to keep body and soul together, many of them fled in despair of making a living, and others were arrested on the charge of concealing wealth and put to death. After a time these exactions became less, and at length the whole land-tax fell into abeyance, for when Africa had been reconquered and an attempt was made to impose the old dues on the land, all record of the former assessment had disappeared, and great dissatisfaction was felt at what was thought a novel and tyrannical exaction[2].

[1] For account of this settlement, cf. Procopius, *De Bell. Vand.*, i. 5, and Victor Vit., i. 5.

[2] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, ii. 8.

The greatest crime in the eyes of the Vandals was the ownership, especially the secret ownership, of portable wealth. When the first settlement was made the country magnates had been especially singled out for oppression, and if anyone was conspicuous for wealth or good birth he was at once enslaved and given to Hunneric and Genzo, the two surviving sons of Gaiseric. No doubt the precariousness of the position of the Vandals dictated this policy. Surrounded as they were by an alien population, dreading fresh attempts at reconquest, and by no means entirely united amongst themselves[1], it was all important for them to secure against internal risings the great danger of a conquering race. The disaffected of their own race it was easy to crush; to check the muttering discontent of the old inhabitants was a far more difficult task. The simplest and most effectual means was to deprive the Africans of their natural leaders. As long as those remained who had the means, or were qualified to head a rising, the Vandals could never be secure, and every expedition of the Eastern or Western Emperors was ten times more dangerous. But when once the important men had been exiled or enslaved, the fear of domestic insurrection well-nigh passed away.

Gaiseric was, however, led by this feeling of insecurity to measures of more doubtful policy. In his anxiety to deprive any rebels of a base of operations he forgot the dominating feature of the political situation of the province. He overlooked the ever-threatening attitude of the Moors, and, trusting too

[1] Prosper, s.a., 446; Prosper Tyro, s.a., 442.

much in his own powers of keeping them quiet, destroyed the walls of all the towns, even of those on the border. The defences of Carthage alone were spared, and the rest of the province was left at the mercy of any attacking force. As long as Gaiseric lived little harm came of this policy; but in the days of his weaker successors, and even after the restoration of the Roman power, the borders were harried by the Moors at their own pleasure, and the miserable inhabitants of the province had to trust to barricades from house to house and such crazy defences as they had the means to throw up[1].

Although the Africans were greatly oppressed for the first few years of the Vandal occupation, it seems that as soon as the new-comers felt themselves secure, their lot was considerably ameliorated, and perhaps did not compare unfavourably with the position of the lower classes within the Roman Empire. No doubt the taxation of the lands unappropriated by the Vandals was very heavy; but it can hardly have been heavier than that imposed by the imperial government[2], and the discontent aroused by Justinian's demands seems to shew that as time went on it was remitted[3]. Moreover Gaiseric allowed no one to plunder the old inhabitants but himself. The grandparents of St Fulgentius had fled from Africa during the invasion and abandoned all their property. On their death their two sons decided to return and try to regain their patrimony. Their house at Carthage had been

[1] Procop., *De Bell. Vandal.*, i. 5; *De Ædificiis*, vi. §§ 5, 6.

[2] Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, ii. 264.

[3] Procop., *De Bell. Vand.*, ii. 8.

assigned to the Arian priests and was of course irrecoverable, but their estates in Byzacene were successfully claimed through the authority of the king himself[1]. There could not have been much serious oppression at this time if two fugitives were willing and able to return, and the whole incident bespeaks an orderly and comparatively just government. The stories of the martyrs point to the same conclusion. Saturus, the procurator of the household of Hunneric, was a man of considerable wealth[2], and the master of Marcella, Martinianus and Saturianus evidently valued them and tried to make them contented[3]. There was no hindrance placed upon free communication, and St Fulgentius was able to found monasteries with far more security than might have been expected in a bitterly Arian state. In fact under the Vandal rule the position of the African peasantry was not exceptionally hard.

One great reform was left to the shame of the Catholics to the heretical conquerors to carry out. It has been said that Carthage was the most immoral of cities; prostitution and still viler vices were rife, and some of the clergy even were contaminated. Against all this the Vandals, at any rate at the commencement of their rule, set their faces. The brothels were closed; the courtesans were forced to marry; the catamites were expelled, and the strictest laws were made against all immorality[4]. Unfortunately in the end the northern invaders relaxed their severe code.

[1] Vita, *Sti. Fulgent.* § 1.
[2] Victor Vit., i. 16.
[3] Victor Vit., i. 11.
[4] Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, viii. 85—100.

They could not preserve their purity in the hot climate of Africa, and soon became the slaves of every form of luxury and vice.

Gaiseric however found that his work did not end with the subjection of the Roman inhabitants. He was at the head of a warrior race, flushed with success and demoralized by fifteen years of pillage and rapine, and he experienced the difficulties of all leaders of conquering hordes. As long as his followers were employed they were easy to rule, as soon as their success was assured discontent broke out amongst them. Probably Gaiseric undertook his piratical voyages as much to secure his own throne as to harass the Empire. On the other hand, the Vandal nobility felt that the increased authority[1] assumed by the king, if necessary in war, was intolerable in peace; and now that they were the undisputed masters of Africa and the time had come to lay aside their swords and settle quietly down, they remembered that there were ugly tales about the manner of his accession. In 442 their discontent nearly came to a head and the miserable province was not far from the horrors of civil war. The conspiracy was discovered and promptly put down. With such ruthlessness were tortures and death meted out to all suspected of plotting against the king, that it was said that more died through this revolt than would have perished in an unsuccessful war[2].

Alarmed by this narrow escape, Gaiseric determined to settle once for all the rule of the succession. In

[1] About this time Gaiseric took the title of King, cf.:—Theophanes, s.a. 441.

[2] Prosper Tyro, *Dioscuro et Eudoxio Coss*, s.a. 442.

his will he declared that in future the crown should always belong to the eldest male of the royal stock[1].

Into the rest of the secular history of Gaiseric's reign there is no need to go at length. It was passed on his part in predatory expeditions against the islands of the Mediterranean, and on the part of the Emperors of the East and West in fruitless expeditions to recover the Roman province. Even before the conquest of Africa was complete, the terrible galleys of the Vandals sallied forth from Carthage and before many years were over they became the undisputed masters of the Mediterranean. In 440 Sicily was ravaged, Panormus was besieged for some months, and the Catholics felt the rage of the invaders[2]. No country was safe, and Spain, Italy and Greece[3] in turn had cause to regret the impotence of the Emperors. On the death of Valentinian, the Vandals were strong enough to extend their conquests, and Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily and the Balearic Isles[4] fell into their hands. Sicily was however recovered by Marcellinus[5] in 463, only to be exposed to fresh attacks until the final peace with Zeno in 476 gave the Empire a brief respite[6].

The supremacy of Gaiseric was however shewn by a still greater exhibition of power. After the murder of Valentinian III., the Empress Eudoxia, who had been forced into a union with Maximus, the assassin of her husband, saw no escape save in seeking help from

[1] Jordanes, *De Rebus Geticis*, c. 33; Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 7.
[2] Idatius, 15th year of Theodosius II. [3] Victor Vit., i. 17.
[4] Victor Vit. i. 4. [5] Idatius, 2nd year of Severus.
[6] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 17.

Carthage[1]. So in 455 the Vandal fleet appeared off Ostia and found the city defenceless before them. In hope of securing some sort of mercy Pope Leo the Great advanced to meet them and besought them to abstain from ravages. The best terms he could obtain was that for fourteen days Rome should be given up to plunder. The Empress, her two daughters, Eudocia and Placidia, Gaudentius the son of Aetus and hundreds of lesser prisoners were carried off. Gold, silver and brass, "the riches of many kings," were seized; the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was destroyed to get at its golden and brazen roof; and richly jewelled chalices, ecclesiastical robes, the furniture of the Imperial palace, the spoils of the Temple brought by Titus from Jerusalem, became the prey of the Vandals. On the return to Africa, one of the ships containing the captured statues was lost, but the rest of the spoil and the prisoners were divided amongst the Vandals and their Moorish allies. The Empress Eudoxia and her daughter Placidia were sent to Constantinople, possibly ransomed by the Emperor Leo[2]; but Eudocia was married to Hunneric, Gaiseric's eldest son. With him she passed sixteen years of married life and became the mother of Hilderic; in 471, she fled to Jerusalem and died there[3].

Gaiseric however was not left to pursue his piracies undisturbed; for both the Western and Eastern Emperors made futile attempts to remove the scourge

[1] For account of Vandal capture of Rome, vide Prosper, s.a. 455; Theophanes, s.a. 447—8; Victor Vit., i. 8; Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 5.

[2] Chron. Paschale, s.a. 445.

[3] Theophanes, s.a. 464.

of the Mediterranean. The abortive expedition of Theodosius in 441 has already been mentioned. In 458[1], Majorian threatened an attack by the Straits of Gibraltar and again Gaiseric entered into negotiations; but the boats, prepared for the expedition, were stolen by the Vandals, so that the Emperor had effected nothing before his death of dysentery. In 463, as has been already stated, Marcellinus recovered Sicily for the Western Empire, and the next few years saw Gaiseric threatened by three other expeditions. In 467 and 469[2], Anthemius is said to have prepared to attack him; but the political situation and the difficulties of navigation foiled his first attempt, and of the second expedition nothing is known, except its conception and the appointment of Marcellinus and Richimer as leaders. Far more dangerous was the great armament despatched by Leo, the Emperor of the West, in 468[3]. It was commonly said that no fewer than 100,000 men were sent under the command of Basiliscus to reconquer Africa. At the same time Marcellinus conquered Sardinia and Heraclius ravaged Tripoli. Gaiseric, dismayed at the strength of the enemy, felt that resistance was hopeless. However where force failed, guile succeeded; during a five days' truce which the crafty barbarian had obtained from Basiliscus, he sent fire-ships amongst the unguarded fleet of the Romans. A sudden attack completed the

[1] Isid., *Hispal. Hist. Vandal.*, § 76; Idatius, 4th year of Majorian; Procop., *De Bello Vandal.*, i. 7.

[2] Idatius, 2nd year of Severus; 1st year of Anthemius; 3rd year of Anthemius.

[3] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 6; Theophanes, s.a. 463.

work of the flames and Leo's Armada was utterly destroyed.

The failure of this enterprise brought quiet to the Vandals. The Western Emperors were soon in no position to harass them, and Odoacer, when he had gained the mastery of Italy feeling little inclination to attack a fellow barbarian, concluded a peace[1] with Gaiseric, by which all Sicily except a small portion was ceded to him in return for a yearly tribute. The Eastern Emperors found enough to do near home and abandoned expeditions to Africa as too costly and precarious. Gaiseric was left to resume his ravages unchecked until in 476 he made a treaty with Zeno[2], and pledged himself to leave the Imperial dominions unmolested on condition of undisturbed possession of his conquests. This treaty was observed on the part of the Romans until the days of Justinian.

The policy pursued by Gaiseric towards the Catholic Church resembled in many ways his treatment of the old landowners. He neither tried to exterminate it, nor did he persecute it with fanatical bigotry, and was willing to leave it alone when he could. But he did his best to depress it, to deprive it of its old authority, and above all he permitted no proselytism amongst the Vandals. Indeed he seems to have accepted it as a factor of the situation, and to have realized that as long as there was a Roman population, so long would there be an anti-Arian Church. But as he would not suffer the old inhabitants to own great wealth or to hold

[1] Victor Vit., i. 4.

[2] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 7; Isidorus, *Hispalensis Hist. Vand.* § 77.

prominent positions, so he was determined not to grant any official importance to the Catholics.

Such a policy necessitated much severity at first. Influential clergy had to be removed; the possessions of the Church were confiscated, and the public services discontinued. Moreover the national creed of the Vandals needed support, and whence was it more fitting to endow the Arian hierarchy than from the rich coffers of their defeated rivals? Therefore from the first the churches and estates of the Catholics were transferred to their conquerors and they were subjected to galling restrictions.

But as soon as the Vandals were firmly seated in their new homes and their Church seemed sufficiently established, there was less need to persecute the Catholics and the regulations were relaxed. Though the persecution was renewed from time to time, sometimes by the king, more often by the unauthorized outbreaks of the Vandals, it was rather dictated by political motives and national jealousy than by hatred for theological opponents. In fact under Gaiseric, the Catholic Church in Africa though disestablished and disendowed was not persecuted. This treatment is surprisingly moderate. The Vandals were Arians, and at this time the lines of division in doctrine and secular affairs were almost coincident. Nearly all the invaders of the Empire were Arians, and Rome herself was now entirely Athanasian; the contest between barbarian and Roman seemed therefore to involve not only the fate of the masters of the world but the creed of all mankind. Under these circumstances there would have been nothing extraordinary if the Vandals had tried to

utterly stamp out African Catholicism; to tolerate or at least shut their eyes to it as they did proves the great political wisdom of their king, and this wisdom was all the greater, if Gaiseric, as has been alleged, was really an apostate from the Catholic Faith[1].

Still though it is fair to praise the moderation of the Vandals, it does not follow that there is no need to pity those under their sway. The mercy of barbarian conquerors and the chances of war are at best cruel, and the African Church had to pass through a very fiery trial before it reached the comparative quiet that marked the close of Gaiseric's reign. The ravages of the invasion and the special damage done to the churches and clergy have already been described, and there is no need to repeat the catalogue of horrors. There can be no doubt that until peace was declared the ecclesiastical organization of the distracted province was completely broken up, and even before the death of St Augustine, the Churches of Carthage, Hippo and Cirta alone survived[2]. When order was restored, Leo the Great wrote to the bishops of Mauritania Caesariensis[3] and rebuked them for the state of their province; and this letter, though addressed to a part always more unruly than the rest of Africa, betrays the extent to which the life of the Church had suffered.

All decency and order had broken down; the episcopate had become the prize of ambitious men and was sought rather for the sake of power than for the oppor-

[1] Isidor., *Hispal. Hist. Vand.*, § 74.

[2] Possidius, *Vita S. Augustini*, c. 28.

[3] Leo I., *Ep.* 12.

tunity of doing good. Elections of bishops were made with violence and confusion; laymen were suddenly consecrated without becoming priests or deacons, and small sees were multiplied. The inferior orders were in no better condition, and mere boys and neophytes were ordained without adequate instruction. The rules of the Church and of morality were disregarded; priests were married for the second time, even though in some cases their first wives were alive, and others were united to widows. Such men could not be allowed to exercise their sacred functions; but to other offenders less severity was to be shewn. The hasty consecration of bishops was to be regarded as valid, and the insignificant sees which had survived were permitted to remain; but in future hands were not to be laid upon candidates for Holy Orders without due consideration, and the small dioceses were to be united as vacancies arose. The letter bears further witness to the violence of the times by its decision as to the treatment of those consecrated virgins who had suffered violence at the hands of the invaders and their allies.

The deliberate harm done to the Catholics by Gaiseric was actuated by two motives; the establishment of Arianism and the preservation of the Vandals from conversion. To accomplish his first object, he confiscated many of the churches and handed them over to the heretical clergy. The basilica of St Celerina or the Martyrs of Scillitana, where the holy bodies of St Perpetua and St Felicitas reposed[1], was thus taken possession of by the Arian priests. At Carthage[2],

[1] Victor Vit., i. 3.

[2] Victor Vit., i. 5.

all the churches within the walls, notably one called Restituta, were lost to the Catholics, and some of those in the suburbs, and especially two dedicated to the memory of St Cyprian, the great champion of orthodoxy, shared the same fate. Some of the confiscated buildings were used for the Arian worship, but others were turned into houses for the Vandal priests[1]. As the Church of Carthage had owned great wealth, Gaiseric was able to endow his national hierarchy without any difficulty from its funds.

In spite of these confiscations the Catholics were in the vast majority. A good many indeed tried to buy the favour of the conquerors by renouncing the Faith and becoming Arians[2]; but the defection of these did not materially weaken the Church, and Gaiseric saw that rigorous measures were necessary to protect his own people from conversion. The problem before him in ecclesiastical matters was identical with that presented by secular affairs. Once again he had to prevent the undoing by sheer weight of numbers of the work accomplished by force of arms; and he adopted the same wise and moderate policy to effect his object. The defeated Catholics were deprived of their leaders and were to be cut off from any opportunities of gaining influence. Many of the clergy and bishops had been killed and driven away during the conquest; now many more were exiled. Quodvultdeus, Bishop of Carthage, and a large number of his clergy were placed upon a ship, described by the prejudiced Victor as

[1] Prosper Tyro, s.a. 439; Isidor., *Hispal. Hist. Vand.*, 75.

[2] Prosper, *De Promissionibus Dei*, iv. 5.

unseaworthy, and bidden go whithersoever they would; providentially they succeeded in reaching Italy and landed in safety at Neapolis[1]. From the seat of government at any rate all the Catholic clergy were to be expelled, and three priests, who for a time escaped the vigilance of the Vandals, were afterwards captured and exiled. Moreover in Carthage the public worship of the Arians was alone allowed and the Catholics were even forbidden to practise their own funeral rites[2].

Outside the city, in the country districts of the Sortes Vandalorum, much the same measures were ordained, but never effectually carried out. All Catholic worship was forbidden, but the clergy were not expelled but simply ordered to abstain from their ministrations, and the vacancies in their ranks, caused by death or exile, were not to be refilled[3]. Probably Gaiseric realized that a rigorous persecution would be both dangerous and futile and hoped to slowly strangle the Church, which he could not actively repress. In the parts belonging to the king and inhabited almost entirely by the Roman provincials, there was much less persecution. For here there was no Arian hierarchy to maintain and no Vandal population to save from conversion; and so, though isolated cases of Catholics suffering for their faith may be found, and though the clergy were exposed to vexatious accusations, the Church, harassed as it was, was never in danger of actual extinction.

Even within the Sortes Vandalorum there was much unavowed toleration, and as long as the Catholic

[1] Victor Vit., i. 5. [2] Victor Vit., i. 5. [3] Victor Vit., i. 7.

priests did not force themselves upon the notice of the conquerors, little heed was paid to the quiet work that they were accomplishing. Their zeal however often outran their discretion and they were too brave or too fanatical to conform to the necessities of the time. As soon as the decrees against Catholic worship in the Sortes Vandalorum had gone forth, a deputation of clergy and leading men waited upon Gaiseric at Ligula, a place on the sea-shore, and asked his permission to live in peace amongst the Vandals and console their afflicted people. Though no doubt they promised not to interfere with the Arians, but one answer could have been expected, and that was given with barbarian ferocity. "I have decreed to grant nothing to your name and race, and you dare to ask such things!" thundered the angry king and ordered them to be taken and drowned in the sea. But owing to the remonstrances of the royal advisers the delegates were permitted to depart[1].

In spite of this repulse the Catholic clergy continued their ministrations in secret and as a rule unmolested. But sometimes, perhaps galled by their own position and the open victory of the heretics, an incautious preacher would call to mind the glorious deeds of the Jewish race and stigmatizing the Vandal monarch as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, or Holofernes, would pray for a national deliverer. At once the fear of the Vandals was aroused and the rash speaker paid for his words by his exile. Six bishops were in this way driven from their sees or otherwise punished, but

[1] Victor Vit., i. 5.

the offence of only one of them has been recorded. Felix of Adrumetum, in Byzacene, received a monk named John from across the seas, and thus no doubt seemed to be in political communication with the Empire. He was banished, but of the other five, Eustratius of Sufes, in Byzacene, Urbanus of Girba and Habetdeus of Theudales, in Zeugitana, Crescens of Aquae, the Metropolitan of Mauritania Caesariensis, Vices of Sabrata and Cresconius of Oea, in Tripoli; not even their punishment is known[1]. Probably they had offended by indiscreet boldness or had excited the anger of some capricious official. They do not seem to have been killed or tortured, and their distance from one another makes it most unlikely that their sufferings were due to definite policy. Their places were not refilled; but yet in spite of the disabilities of the Church and the harassing of the Vandals the number of the Catholics continually increased.

As time went on and the conquest of Africa became recognized by all the world as the established order of things, the restrictions on the Church were gradually relaxed. In 452, the names of certain African bishops occur amongst the signatories of the canons of the Council of Chalcedon[2]; probably these were merely exiles, but if they were delegates it shews that the ecclesiastical organization of Africa was already restored and that the Vandal king had begun the policy of toleration on which he was formally to enter in a few years. For Gaiseric, as he saw the steady growth of his *prestige* beyond his dominions and the absence of

[1] Victor Vit., i. 7. [2] Ruinart, *Hist. Persec. Vandal.*, vi. 4.

all domestic revolts, was more disposed to look with contemptuous indifference than fear upon the Church of his defeated subjects, and so, when Valentinian interceded for the Catholics of Carthage, he was ready to consider his requests. It was a proud moment for the Vandal king. As the Emperor of the West, the former master of Africa, was now a suppliant for bare justice to his old people at the throne of a barbarian conqueror, it may be fairly supposed that gratified vanity as much as change of policy brought about Gaiseric's short-lived toleration of the Church. But whatever his motive may have been, on Sunday, the 25th of October, 454, the king allowed Deogratias to be consecrated in the Basilica of St Faustus, as Catholic Bishop of Carthage[1]. Two churches at least, and perhaps a still larger number, were restored to the Church and her ecclesiastical organization was once more permitted.

In bringing this about, Valentinian III. was unconsciously preparing the greatest benefits for the citizens of Rome herself. The year after the consecration of Deogratias saw the fall of the Imperial City and the carrying off of thousands of her inhabitants. The miserable captives were carried to Carthage and kept there until they could be divided and sold to the Vandals and their Moorish allies. The sea-voyage in crowded ships and the violence of their captors had broken down the health of many, and now they found themselves face to face with all the horrors of slavery in the hot climate of Africa. To them in their awful plight the restored Church held out a helping hand;

[1] Victor Vit., i. 8; Prosper Tyro, *Ætio et Studio Coss.*

the Basilicas of St Faustus and Novae were fitted up for the care of the sick, money was freely spent and the gold and silver vessels of the altar were melted down to prevent the breaking up of families or other more terrible effects of bondage.

Deogratias earned by his devotion and self-sacrifice both the respect and hatred of his enemies. They could not deny his virtues, but they feared his example would turn many from Arianism. They made him the mark of continual accusations and insults, but he was too popular to be safely attacked and for three years he was able to continue his good works and ministration. In 457 the saintly bishop passed away, and so great was the veneration in which he was held, that it was necessary to keep secret the place of his burial, in order to preserve his body from the too zealous hands of those who sought for relics of their beloved pastor[1].

Gaiseric refused to allow the consecration of a successor to Deogratias, and perhaps alarmed by his popularity and the devotion his holy life had aroused, once more revived the persecution. He renewed the decree against the filling of vacant sees in the Proconsular province and visited the ordination of priests with the severest penalties. If the life of the Church had solely depended upon its overseers, it would have been now nearly stamped out. Where once there had been one hundred and sixty-four bishops, only three were left; Vincent of Gigga and Paul[2] of Sinna still occupied their dioceses, but the third, Quintian, was

[1] Victor Vit., i. 8.

[2] This bishop is described by Victor (i. 9), as "vere merito et nomine Paulus."

in exile at Edessa, a town in Macedonia. The tenets of Catholicism, however, were far too deeply rooted in the hearts of the Africans to be easily destroyed and the severity of the Arians only evoked still further proof of the Church's sincerity. Many Catholics now earned the crown of martyrdom, and a still larger number suffered grievously rather than renounce their faith.

The story of Martinian, Saturian, their two brothers and Maxima shews the inefficacy of the Vandal persecution. These five were the household slaves of a member of Gaiseric's bodyguard, Martinian being his armourer and Maxima his housekeeper. The Vandal treated them kindly, and, seeing that Maxima was as beautiful as she was good, thought that if he gave her to Martinian as his wife he would make them both contented in his service. But Maxima had devoted herself to a life of continence and persuaded her husband to respect her vows. Moreover she induced him to lead a religious life and urged him to win over his brothers also. They all now deserted their Vandal master and betook themselves to Tabraca, a village on the borders of Zeugitana and Numidia, where the four men entered a monastery, and Maxima joined a convent hard by. As soon as their escape was known a vigorous hue and cry was raised, but it was only after many enquiries had been made and many bribes had been given that their retreat was discovered. They were recaptured, imprisoned and scourged; but though their faith was unshaken, a curse seemed to fall on all who oppressed them. An appeal was made to Gaiseric and he released Maxima and directed that the men should be sent to Capsur the

Moor in the desert of Capra Picta. Their exile affected them as little as their former sufferings and they set themselves to spread the Gospel among their captors with extraordinary success. A great multitude of Moors were baptized, a bishop was summoned from the Roman province and a church was built. The rapid growth of Christianity alarmed the Moorish king—he asked the help of Gaiseric. The Vandal monarch saw that nothing could put a stop to the zeal of the exiles but death. His advice was taken and they were all compelled to lay down their lives for their faith[1].

The story of these martyrs throws great light upon the condition of Africa at this time; it illustrates the relations of conquerors and conquered, and shews how far the persecution of the Arians had been a success. The treatment of the five slaves was evidently far from unkind. Two of them at any rate occupied positions of great importance and trust, and their master realized their value and did his best to make them happy. There was none of the barbaric tyranny which the conquest seemed to foreshadow, and the Vandals once firmly settled in Africa seem to have indulged in no unnecessary severity. When the slaves fled, they were able to effect their escape, and it was only with considerable trouble that their refuge was discovered. No doubt their hiding-place was somewhat inaccessible; but it is very remarkable that in this persecuted land any place should be found safe enough for two religious communities. So far the Arians had accomplished little, and even in the Procon-

[1] Victor Vit., i. 10—11.

sular Province, the district especially given up to the Vandals and subject to the greatest oppression, the position of the Catholic Church was still but little impaired.

Gaiseric recognized his failure and the escape of Martinian and Maxima urged him to redouble his efforts against Catholicism. Proculus was appointed to Zeugitana, with orders to use his utmost efforts to stamp out the faith of Nicaea. The new attack was aimed rather at the efficiency than the lives of the clergy, and it was hoped in this manner to disarm the Catholics. Their churches were ravaged, the sacred vessels were destroyed, the Scriptures were seized, and the altar-cloths and vestments made into garments (camisias et femoralia) by the soldiers. If any priest tried to protect his church he was imprisoned and tortured. For refusing to comply with the demands of the spoilers Bishop Valerian of Abensa, though over eighty years of age, was driven away from his see, and so strict were the orders against shewing him any hospitality that for a long time this aged man had to sleep in the open air. This outburst as long as it lasted was very terrible, but it speedily came to a close. Proculus was seized with a loathsome disease, and with his death the zeal of the persecutors seems to have waned[1].

Gaiseric's attempt to expel all Catholics from the civil service may be perhaps ascribed to this period. If it was ever intended to be more than a declaration of policy, it cannot have taken place early in his reign; as until the Church had been persecuted for some time the rigid enforcement of the decree would have meant the disorganization of the whole administration. As it

[1] Victor Vit., I. 12.

was, the order, like other measures of Arian intolerance, was not thoroughly enforced. Probably if a Government *employé* forced his views upon the notice of his superiors he suffered for his imprudence; but as long as the Catholics kept silence as to their creed, no question was asked[1].

Outside the Sortes much the same religious policy was pursued as within it; but here the numbers of the Arians were much smaller and there was far less risk in clinging to Catholicism. The Church, as long as it was unobtrusive, was safe; as soon as it made too open advances, it was persecuted. At Tunuzuda, Gales and Vicus Ammoniae, Arian mobs attacked the orthodox as they celebrated the Lord's Supper, and mingled the blood of martyrs with the consecrated elements. At Regia, in Numidia, the Catholics reopened their church one Easter-Day, but in the midst of their worship the Arians, led by Anderit, a priest, burst in, slew the lector as he sang the Alleluia (alleluiaticum melos) in the pulpit, massacred a large number of the congregation where they were, and afterwards led out many others to torture[2]. Such atrocities as these no doubt occurred from time to time, but it would be wrong to see in them any settled policy; they were rather the spasmodic and spontaneous outbursts of religious fanaticism and racial hate, and were quite ineffectual in hindering the spread of the Catholic faith.

In fact the names of very few martyrs have been recorded at all, and it is very noticeable that all those persecuted by Gaiseric himself were men of prominent position. He seems to have passed over in contempt

[1] Victor Vit., I. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, I. 13.

the Catholics of minor rank, and noticed only those whose stedfastness was an encouragement and whose sufferings would be a warning to their fellow-believers. As early as 437, four Spaniards, Arcadius, Probus, Paschasius and Eutychius, had suffered for their faith[1]. They were distinguished amongst the servants of the king for their wisdom and fidelity and every effort was made to turn them to Arianism. However they stood firm; and first proscribed, then exiled and tortured, they at length won their martyrs' crowns. Paschillus, the young brother of Paschasius and Eutychius, followed their example and bore scourgings and slavery rather than change his faith.

In the case of Sebastian, Gaiseric used religious differences as a mere pretext to get rid of a dangerous guest. In 440, the son-in-law of Boniface took refuge in Africa during the absence of its conqueror in Sicily. Gaiseric felt the danger of allowing so distinguished a soldier and statesman to be at Carthage, and feared that he would head the discontented Vandals and seize the kingdom for himself, or would try to recover Africa in order to make his peace with Valentinian III. The Sicilian expedition was therefore abandoned, and returning quickly home Gaiseric got rid of his unwelcome guest on the plea of his Catholicism[2].

The three other sufferers, whose names are recorded, were all well-known men, and one at least had incurred the wrath of the king by his missionary zeal. Armogasta was in the service of the king's son Theoderic,

[1] Prosper, s.a. 441; Prosper Tyro, s.a. 437.

[2] Prosper Tyro, s.a. 440; Victor Vit., i. 6; Bury's *Fragments*, vol. iv., p. 612; Suidas, p. 194.

Mascula was the Arch-mime at Carthage; Saturus was the procurator of the household of Hunneric and a very rich man. To have such distinguished men professing the Catholic creed bespoke the weakness of the State religion; but it was most important that their punishment should not rouse the zeal of their fellow-believers. Theoderic, after putting Armogasta to the torture, wished to behead him, but was stayed by Jucundus, an Arian priest, who maintained that if a Catholic was deliberately slain, the enthusiasm aroused by his constancy would more than counterbalance the fear caused by his death; if on the other hand he was ill-treated and killed by inches, it would be far more difficult for the Church to bestow on him the veneration of a martyr. This diabolical advice was followed; Armogasta was put to the roughest field labour and slowly done to death[1].

The same policy was adopted in the case of Mascula. As he would not be bribed to embrace Arianism he was condemned to death, but peculiar instructions were given to the executioners. If the prisoner shewed the least signs of fear at the sight of the uplifted sword he was to be slain at once; a troublesome subject would be punished and the Catholics could not claim a martyr. But if he stood firm he was to be spared; for to add a witness to the truth of Catholicism would only hurt the Arian cause. Even when face to face with death Mascula refused to quail and was only able to earn the confessor's crown[2].

Saturus brought upon himself the wrath of the Vandals by preaching against their heresies. He was

[1] Victor Vit., I. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, I. 15.

offered great riches, if he would keep silence, but was threatened with the loss of all his fortune and separation from his children, and, worse than all, was told that his wife would be forced into a loathsome union with a camel-driver, if he persisted. But nothing could turn him from his course; despite the tears and pathetic entreaties of his family, Saturus chose poverty and bereavement rather than defile his baptismal robe by becoming a convert to Arianism[1].

The proscription of the Catholics seemed likely to last until the end of Gaiseric's reign, but a change in the political situation afforded them relief. The year before he died the Vandal conqueror arranged a peace with the emperor Zeno, by which he bound himself to grant religious toleration to his subjects. The Catholics were therefore allowed to reopen their churches, and the bishops and clergy were recalled from exile[2]. Gaiseric did not long survive this concession; in 477 he died, after a reign of 37 years, 3 months and 6 days, and was succeeded by Hunneric his son[3].

During all these years the Catholic Church had been liable to persecution, and if the contemptuous indifference of the Vandals left it occasionally unmolested, the least exhibition of its power, the slightest imprudence of its priests, or the mere caprice of its enemies were enough at any time to subject it to the direst perils. It had lost its officers, its buildings and its wealth. It had seen some of its members fall away and others seal their faith with their blood; but it had

[1] Victor Vit., I. 16.

[2] *Ibid.*, I. 17 : Cassiodorus Chron., s.a. last year of Zeno.

[3] Prosper Tyro, VII., *Theodosio et Festo*, Coss.

not lost ground. Indeed it even grew in real power and authority. The Gospel had been spread among the Moors; some of the Arians had been converted, and the persecution itself was the best proof of the genuine dread felt by the Vandals, even in their day of triumph, of its influence and strength.

Gaiseric had tried to drive all Catholics from the civil service; but he failed. Armogasta, in the hour of his death, could appeal to Felix, procurator of the house of the king's son, as a fellow-Catholic[1]; and in the next reign the edict against the employment of Catholics by the State had to be renewed. The inscriptions that have survived the wear and tear of fourteen centuries shew that even in this reign the Church enjoyed some peace. The epitaphs erected to the priest Boniface at Tiaret in Mauritania Caesariensis in 461 and to Januarus in 449[2] are evidence that the Catholics were able to pay the last rites to their departed brethren. In the more inaccessible parts of Africa Catholic monasteries still existed in security.

In fact the Arians had failed, and they knew it. They could not do without the Catholics, and they dared not rouse their zeal. The utmost they could do was to drive the Church into hiding and to prevent it from making open profession of its creed. Gaiseric himself was half-hearted in religious questions and did not scruple to alter his attitude toward the Catholics if policy required him to do so. As long as the Arians feared to risk a final conflict, as long as the Catholics were true to themselves, the Church of Carthage could suffer no irreparable loss.

[1] Victor Vit., I. 14.

[2] *C. I. L.*, vol. VIII. 9731, 9271.

CHAPTER V.

The Reign of Hunneric.

With the accession of Hunneric the decay of the Vandals began. When they crossed the Straits of Gibraltar they were inured to fatigue and war and were a terrible fighting machine, but for fifty years they had lived in the hot climate of Africa and had enjoyed the fruits of others' toil and were already losing their former energy. No longer did they ravage the shores of the Mediterranean, being hardly able to maintain their hold on the lands their fathers had won. Consequently this reign presents few prominent features, and the relations of Hunneric with other nations can be very briefly described by saying that with the Eastern Empire he was at peace, and Odoacer, king of Italy, agreed to pay him tribute for Sicily.

His position was indeed not such as to invite an active foreign policy. He was secure from attacks from abroad and was continually exposed to them at home. For now that Gaiseric was dead, the Moors of the border again resumed their raids on the Province. Hunneric, it may be, cared little about the miseries of his non-Vandal subjects, but at any rate the folly of

Gaiseric in denuding the frontier towns of their defences now became manifest owing to conquests of the utmost importance being made by the barbarians in this reign. They overran Numidia and made it practically their own, carrying their raids into the very heart of the Province. But far more important than any number of plundering expeditions was the capture of Mount Aurasius. This rocky tableland raises its precipitous sides on the southern borders of Numidia and is one of the chief strategic positions in all Africa. It is only thirteen days' march from Carthage, and includes within its limits a large tract of fruitful and well-watered land. An enemy established there could form his head-quarters on the summit in almost perfect security, and descend at will to ravage the plains in every direction. Once fortified it was extremely hard to take, and the steep approaches were the despair of an attacking force. It remained impregnable to the Vandals, and even the soldiers of Belisarius under the brave and skilful Solomon had the utmost difficulty in recapturing it[1]. From this time for over fifty years the Moors from this strong position were able almost entirely to cut off Numidia and Mauritania from the other parts of Africa[2].

The Catholics under Hunneric underwent strange vicissitudes. At first they were barely tolerated; then for a few years they enjoyed practical freedom of worship; finally they had to face a persecution terrible alike for its relentless vigour and its systematic organization. Such extraordinary changes as these would have been impossible if the king had had any real

[1] Procop. *De Bell. Vand.*, II. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, I. 7.

religious convictions; but having none, he appears to have considered that to the adroit statesman all sects and all theological disputes were equally useful. He attempted to employ the religious quarrels of his subjects for his own advantage, and tried alternately toleration and persecution to bend the Catholics to his own political ends. Of course he was nominally an Arian, and was quite prepared to insist upon the supremacy of his theological views when it suited his turn, but he did not see in the prevalence of Catholicism any reason for oppressing the greater part of his subjects, and was quite willing to grant them toleration as the price of domestic peace.

The Catholics, on their side, had to keep to the tacit agreement under which they enjoyed toleration by remembering that as a conquered race they were bound to defer to their master's wishes. If they made no attempts to convert the Vandals and were prepared to blindly support the royal policy they might hope for permission to practise their religion. But as the consciences of the Catholics would not suffer them to observe the first condition, their attempts to propagate their opinions drew down upon them the royal displeasure. The whole machinery of the State and the bitter fanaticism of the Arians were turned against them, and so grinding and relentless were the trials of the Church that it may well be supposed that only the death of the king saved Catholicism in Africa from total extinction.

The last year of Gaiseric had seen some sort of toleration granted to the Church in Carthage, and the new king left things as they were, for a time neither extending nor curtailing the privileges of the Catholics.

In this Victor sees the "craft of barbarians," and declares that Hunneric wished to entice the orthodox into indiscretions for which they might have to atone with heavy penalties[1]. There can be no doubt that the Vandal monarch was quite capable of such a policy, but a simpler and far less discreditable explanation of his actions is perfectly possible.

To a small military aristocracy like the Vandals the existence of the indigenous population was indispensable, nor was Hunneric likely to estrange the great majority of his subjects by deliberately insulting their religious convictions without sufficiently urgent provocation.

While the Catholics were unmolested, Hunneric devoted his energies to the suppression of heresy. Manichaeism had always found many supporters in Africa, and, despite the efforts of St Augustine, was now more firmly seated at Carthage than in any other part of the world. If we are to believe the Catholic historian this fatal heresy attracted chiefly those whose creed gave them a less firm grip of Christian principles than that of Nicaea, nor were the Arian clergy unaffected by its baneful doctrines. The king, regarding the spread of Manichaean teaching as a social danger, attacked the whole sect, without respect to nationality or religion. A few Manichaeans were burnt and many were exiled, and so severe were Hunneric's measures against this dreaded sect that in Africa we hear no more of its influence, though it had yet many centuries of vitality in other parts of Christendom[2].

[1] Victor Vit., II. 1.

[2] Victor Vit., II. 1; Neander, vol. IV. p. 447.

In 479, when Hunneric had been two years on the throne, the Catholics received still further privileges and experienced once more a brief period of sunshine. Placidia, the widow of Olybrius, one of the short-lived emperors of the West, the sister-in-law of the king, united with the emperor Zeno in beseeching leave for the Church of Carthage to elect a bishop of their own. The required permission was given, on condition that Zeno should extend a similar toleration to the Arians in his dominions; but if the emperor broke this bargain, all the orthodox bishops of Africa were liable to be driven into exile among the Moors. But although Zeno accepted the proffered terms it was a far harder matter to induce the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church of Carthage to do the same. For since, as they plausibly argued, any violation of the treaty on the part of the emperor was liable to draw down upon their innocent heads an unmerited punishment, it was better to be content with Christ as their only Head, than to exchange their peaceful obscurity for a dangerous privilege. However their fears were overruled. The Imperial legate Alexander attended their consultations and would receive no answer but an acceptance of the terms; and as the Catholic laity were clamouring for a visible head with all the enthusiasm of the African character and were in no temper to brook a refusal, the ecclesiastical authorities had no alternative but to yield, and on June 18, 479, elected Eugenius to the long vacant see[1].

It was twenty-three years since the last Bishop of Carthage had died and during that time the Church

[1] Victor Vit., II. 1—3.

had been without a head. Many young men testified that they had never known what it was to have a bishop over them, and welcomed the consecration of Eugenius with the utmost joy and thankfulness. He was well worthy of their respect and love, and set himself at once to give a noble example of good works. The organization of the Church was restored by him; vacant sees and livings were refilled, and the communities of women consecrated to a life of charity were once more established. All that he had Eugenius gave to the poor, only keeping for himself the bare necessaries of life, and by his self-sacrifice he aroused the enthusiasm of his flock. Large sums of money were given him to distribute, and it was a wonder how a Church, so often plundered and so terribly oppressed, could afford such vast amounts for charitable purposes. Still no fear of poverty disturbed the bishop, and with a noble faith that the supply would not cease, he gave away daily all the money as soon as it was given to him[1].

In spite of his holy life he could not escape the malignity and false accusations of the Arian clergy. At first Cyrila, their patriarch, tried to arouse the anger of Hunneric by declaring that Eugenius was not worthy of his position and refused to preach the Word of God to his people. Such a statement as this was palpably false, and the Arians prepared a much more subtle attack by affirming that admission to the Catholic churches was refused to all in Vandal costume. If Eugenius admitted this, it would be easy to infer that the Church was organizing at its services a

[1] Victor Vit., I. 3.

rebellion against its persecutors; if he denied it, it was clear that the Vandals were dangerously attracted by the orthodox creed. However but one reply could be truthfully given,—no man was excluded from the Catholic services, however he was dressed. It could not be otherwise; the House of God was open to all, and, as many of the orthodox wore the Vandal costume as household servants of the king, to shut out all those who appeared to be Vandals would cause the exclusion of many of the faithful.

But by one accusation or another the Arian clergy had achieved their object and had aroused the fears of the king. He determined to stamp out Catholicism at any rate amongst his personal entourage, and issued peculiarly cruel orders. Soldiers were stationed at the Catholic churches armed with combs with long, sharp teeth. When any man in Vandal dress tried to enter, they were to cast these terrible instruments into their hair and drag them from the doors. This brutal order was brutally carried out. Such violence was used that the scalps of some were torn away; some lost their eyesight, others died of pain, and the women were dragged in derision through the streets. In spite of all, not one Catholic changed his faith, and Hunneric had to alter his policy and try less violent but more effectual remedies. He deprived the officials who refused to conform to Arianism of their pay and allowance and condemned some of them to the roughest field labour in the plains of Utica [1].

The persecution soon became general; but the anger of Hunneric was excited against the Church,

[1] Victor Vit., II. 3, 4.

less by its success than by the political situation of the time. The king found himself growing old. He must have been nearly a man when Valentinian received him as a hostage in 435, and he cannot now have been less than sixty. By the rules for the succession devised by Gaiseric the kingdom was always to belong to the eldest male of the royal stock, and would pass to Theoderic and the children of Genzo before Hunneric's own son could succeed. The king therefore planned to remove those who stood between Hilderic and the throne. To do so meant wholesale murder, but from this he did not shrink. Theoderic, his wife and children, and Godagis, son of Genzo, were either banished or slain; Jucundus, the Arian priest, and many of the Vandal nobility suffered death or condemnation to slavery. Such cruelties as these needed a strong king, and to whom was Hunneric to look for support? The Vandal nobility which formed the backbone of the Arian party were already estranged by the cruelty with which Hunneric had treated the royal house. On the other hand, the oppressed Catholics had experienced comparative kindness, and as a subject people they had little reason to care if their conquerors exterminated each other. To the Catholics therefore Hunneric appealed and offered complete freedom of worship in return for their support.

As however it was impossible for them to buy toleration at the price of murder and robbery, their refusal exasperated the king. He saw his plans checkmated and his own people alienated without advantage to himself. The despised race, whom he had meant to help, scorned his favours, thwarted his

hopes and left him without support in his perilous position. Policy and revenge urged him in the same direction; by persecuting the Catholics he would at once convince the Catholics of the folly of spurning his offers and regain the loyalty of the Arians[1].

Still Hunneric's ambition had led him into an awkward situation and there was a danger of driving the provincials to despair before the confidence of the Vandals had been restored. For a time he had need of great caution and decided to adopt the old policy of Gaiseric rather than rush at once into wholesale massacres and deportations. With this purpose it was again decreed that all Catholics in the army, civil service and royal household must become Arians or take the consequences of contumacy. Those who refused were exiled, and many were driven to Sicily and Sardinia, or were forced to live as hermits in the Numidian deserts near Sicca, Veneria, and Lares. For a short time the organization of the Catholics was not directly attacked and the king was satisfied with trying to cripple and impoverish it. As long as a bishop lived, he was left in peace; but when a see fell vacant, the treasury seized its estates and exacted a fine of 500 solidi before a new prelate could be consecrated.

Comparatively mild as this persecution was, it alarmed the royal advisers, and they pointed out how greatly it endangered the position of the Arian clergy in Thrace and the rest of the Imperial dominions. But they could not turn Hunneric from his course, and he sought in every direction an excuse for an avowed persecution throughout the Province. The communities

[1] Victor Vit., II. 5.

of women devoted to the service of the Church attracted his attention and he determined to cast suspicion upon them. The Vandals seem to have paid no reverence to the ascetic virtues, and eagerly sought for proofs that the nuns had proved faithless to their vows of chastity, and that their priests had been guilty of incontinence. The consecrated virgins were seized and subjected to an examination of the grossest and most painful character. Some died of shame and torture, others were crippled for life; but this atrocity revealed no scandals, and the morality of the clergy was triumphantly vindicated against all defamers[1].

Hunneric, undaunted by his failure, was still determined upon persecution, and decided to try to root out the Catholics altogether by one drastic measure. Still following his father's tactics, he devoted all his energies to exterminating the clergy, trusting that the laity would be compliant when deprived of their spiritual advisers. On one day nearly five thousand ecclesiastics[2] of all ranks were torn from their homes and in one mournful procession were driven into exile and misery. The weight of years or of sickness gave no protection; all alike were forced to face the terrors of the desert and the barbarities of the Moors. Some could hardly walk through infirmity, others were blind through old age. Felix, the venerable Bishop of Abbir Major, stricken with paralysis and no longer able to speak or feel, was bound like a log of wood upon a mule and carried far away from his home and friends.

[1] Victor Vit., II. 7.

[2] The exact number given by Victor (II. 8) varies according to the reading from 4776 to 4976.

The long march from Zeugitana through Sicca and Lares to the desert caused the most terrible privations. Worn out by the rough road and exhausted by the burning sun, the miserable travellers found little rest even by night; for, forced into narrow prisons of indescribable filth, they were packed like "locusts or grains of corn," and found sleep an impossibility. Many fainted by the way or were too weak to go on; but their Moorish guards tied their feet together and dragged them along like the carcases of dead animals over the rough mountain roads. The terrible injuries inflicted by the "sharp swords of the rocks" put an end to all their sufferings.

Even in their direst need this noble band of martyrs were not without comfort. The Catholics along their route came out to give what help they could, and the knowledge that it was their faith for which they bled supported the minds of all. A few, it is true, fell away, but most, cheered by their fellow-sufferer, Cyprian, the saintly Bishop of Unuzibira, endured to the end. The survivors at length reached the deserts, only to face new hardships. At first their persecutors had allowed them a miserable ration of barley, the food of brute beasts; but even this was soon taken from them. Yet in spite of the peril of starvation and in spite of the scorpions and poisonous insects, with which the land of their exile abounded, the Hand of God sheltered them still and they were preserved from every danger[1]. The ultimate fate of these confessors is not known, and there are no records to tell whether they gradually found their way back to their homes or continued to

[1] Victor Vit., II. 8—12; Victor of Tunno, s. a. 475.

drag on a miserable existence amongst the barbarians of the mountains.

Hunneric was by no means satisfied with the simple crippling of the Church's activity, and set himself to organize a systematic persecution throughout Africa. He went far beyond Gaiseric's methods and determined to turn the whole machinery of the State against the Catholics. But to be successful in so thorough a scheme it was necessary to win the sympathy of all his officials and to make sure that none of them would favour the oppressed Church. He was, moreover, as yet unwilling to throw over his friendship with Zeno and he therefore made a great show of enquiring into the theological disputes of the Catholics and Arians. On May 20, 483, in the presence of Reginus, the Imperial ambassador, a letter was drawn up and despatched by fleet horses to Eugenius and his fellow bishops. In this it was stated that, contrary to edicts, often reissued, the Catholics had held meetings and celebrated the Eucharist in the Sortes Vandalorum. As therefore Hunneric wished the provinces committed by God to his care to be free from any causes of offence, he summoned all the Catholic bishops to a conference with the Arian prelates on the subject of the Homoousion of the Son with the Father, promising them a safe conduct and considerate treatment[1].

This letter spread the utmost consternation amongst the Catholics, and they at once foresaw that the conference was only the prelude of a terrible persecution. Eugenius feared that freedom of speech would not be allowed, and was convinced that the only hope of fair

[1] Victor Vit., II. 13.

treatment lay in the presence of foreigners, who could report throughout the civilized world the sufferings they were soon to endure. He begged Obadus, the chief minister of Hunneric, to allow representatives to attend from the other Christian countries, and especially from Rome, "which is the head of all Churches," in order that a matter, which concerned all Christendom, should be discussed by the delegates of all Christendom. His request was refused, and with fear and trembling the Catholic bishops prepared to assemble at Carthage[1].

In the meantime the action of the king did not tend to allay their apprehensions. The persecutions continued, and were aimed especially at those who were the chief pillars of the Church. Secundianus, bishop of Mimiana, was beaten with 150 stripes and driven from the country. Praesidius, bishop of Sufetula, was exiled. Mansuetus, Germanus, Fusculus and many others were scourged. The Arians were forbidden to meet the Catholics in social intercourse, and just before the conference met, Laetus, bishop of Nepte, who had been in prison for some time, was burned to death. But, whatever were their forebodings, the Catholics were bound to obey the royal commands, and on the appointed day four hundred and sixty-one orthodox bishops from every part of Africa and even from the islands subject to the Vandals met together in Carthage[2].

The conference was postponed a few days to give the Catholics every convenience for assembling, but when it met the surroundings were not such as to restore their confidence. They found Cyrila, their chief enemy, with

[1] Victor Vit., II. 14, 15. [2] *Ibid.*, II. 16—18.

his followers gathered round him, seated upon a lofty throne, while they were expected to humbly stand at its base. This augured no good, and their position seemed that of suppliants, not of parties to a free debate. Still they decided to make the best of matters and agreed to choose ten spokesmen from their ranks, lest it should be said that they tried to win by sheer weight of numbers[1].

An impartial judge was evidently the first thing to secure and the Catholics at once raised the point. They were always glad, they said, to meet their opponents in fair fight, but who was to be the assessor of this discussion? The royal secretary replied, "The Patriarch Cyrila," and the impossibility of an impartial conference was at once revealed. Such an appointment was palpably unfair; it implied the entrusting of the final award to one of the parties to the dispute, and it was absurd to say that the Arian patriarch would give the victory to anyone but his own followers. It was natural enough that the Catholics should object most strongly to such an arrangement, but it cannot be said they acted wisely in this crisis. They ought to have entered a dignified protest and demanded another judge, or they might have withdrawn from the conference altogether. Instead of this they obscured the main point at issue, raised the whole controversy at once and roused all the passions of the audience, by enquiring with what authority Cyrila claimed the title of "Patriarch." At once a tumult arose and all argument was impossible. Victor declares that the Arians themselves were responsible for the confusion, Cyrila

[1] For this conference see Victor Vit., II. 15; IV. 2; Hefele, IV. 35.

blamed the Catholic spectators, and as he was in authority the latter view prevailed. Every Catholic present was scourged with 100 strokes, and in spite of Eugenius' protesting cry, "May God see the violence we suffer; may He know the persecution which we undergo from the persecutors!" the body of the hall was cleared of all but Arians.

When quiet was restored the Catholics set themselves to the business in hand, and addressing the President in Latin, begged him to state the subjects for discussion. Cyrila answered, "I do not know Latin," and again the anger of the orthodox rose. The reply was evidently a subterfuge to prevent any definite decision; and they declared that before now they had heard the self-styled Patriarch use the Roman tongue, and that he ought not thus to excuse himself when such a burning question was awaiting settlement.

For two days the rival parties wrangled without approaching any nearer to an agreement. Victor of course lays all the blame on the Arians, but if any Vandal account had been written, it is quite possible that the Catholics would not seem altogether free from fault. Their champion himself admits that they found their opponents unexpectedly prepared for the theological debate, and it was undoubtedly their action which brought the conference to a premature close. For the Catholics withdrew after the second day, protesting that their arguments were always met by quibbles and that no justice could be expected from such an assembly, and presented their defence in written form to the king[1].

[1] This defence constitutes Book III. of the history of Victor Vitensis.

So ended the great conference of 484 and with it the chief hopes of toleration in Africa. No doubt it had never been seriously intended to help the Catholics, but at the same time it cannot be denied that Eugenius did not prove himself a prudent leader. The meeting was forced on him and he ought to have made the best of it. He could not hope to derive any great benefit from its decision, but he might have won the sympathy of all but his most violent opponents. In this he failed by giving vent to his righteous indignation at the appointment of a partisan president and Cyrila's professed ignorance of Latin, instead of accepting the adverse conditions with a dignified protest. Whether the Catholics shewed sufficient dialectical skill in maintaining their doctrines cannot be ascertained, but, as their opponents evidently supported their cause with firmness and ability, their hasty withdrawal was an undoubted blunder. Even if Hunneric had been sincere in calling a conference, their action must have seemed to him self-condemnatory; if he was only seeking a pretext for persecution, it exactly suited his turn. In the world at large, its condemnation by a biassed judge would have done the Catholics no harm, but by their withdrawal from the Council they abandoned their sole chance of vindication in Africa. Though Eugenius was forced as he was to appear at a conference from which no justice could be expected, he should have realised the necessity of going on to the end, and have borne with dignity what he could not avoid.

The Arians of course made the most of their victory, and alleged that the Catholics had been completely routed in argument and had declined to

continue the debate. Such a report as this was most welcome to Hunneric, for it gave him a free hand. He had not yet decided to exterminate the orthodox, whose support he still hoped to secure for his political schemes. The abortive conference could be used for whichever purpose he desired. If he wished to apply more pressure, he could quote the failure of the orthodox; if he wished to hold his hand, he could profess to entertain honest doubts as to the truth of the Arian creed. At the present juncture it was his policy to persecute in accordance with the wishes of his Arian subjects on the chance of overcoming the Catholics' scruples. So once more religious oppression swept over Africa.

All the Catholic bishops who had not come to the conference and all who had hastened home again were summoned to Carthage. On February 7 the churches throughout the land had been closed and their property handed over to the Arians; and as Victor of Vite says "the Vandals did not blush to issue against us the law, which formerly our Christian emperors had passed against them and other heretics for the honour of the Catholic Church, adding many things of their own as it pleased their tyrannical power[1]."

In fact with grim humour Hunneric turned against the Catholics the very weapons they had used against the Donatists. He reissued the Theodosian edict of 392, as one of the most terrible measures ever yet employed against a religious body. For not only were the Catholic priesthood proscribed, their churches and property confiscated, their services and especially their baptisms and

[1] Victor Vit., iv. 1.

ordinations forbidden, but they themselves were banished from every town or inhabited place, were deprived of their places if in the service of the Crown, lost the power of bequest and gift, and even in the end of holding property. Every religious and civil right was taken from them and they were at the mercy of every informer. The most stringent regulations were made for the execution of this edict; every official was to fulfil its provisions to the best of his power, and severe penalties were enacted against those who did not rigidly enforce the edict. In fact it was almost safer to be a Catholic than to be a judge lenient towards them; the Catholic could at most be reduced to poverty and exile, while the judge was to be proscribed and put to death. A short period of grace was however allowed to the Catholics. The edict was issued on February 25th, 484, and was not to come into force until June 1st, but after that date all who had not become Arians were exposed to the full fury of the storm[1].

The Catholics seemed indeed beaten. Such a persecution as this had never before overtaken them, either under pagan emperors or heretical kings. Now for the first time did they realize the irresistible power of the State, when applied to religious matters with all the vigour of semi-civilised fanaticism.

However before these edicts, "feralia veneno toxicato transversa[2]," came into force, Hunneric shewed how little he cared about the theological dispute. His own projects alone urged him on, and the persecution of the Catholics was the outcome of political revenge, not of religious hate. The orthodox bishops,

[1] Victor Vit., iv. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 3.

who were still detained at Carthage, were suddenly expelled from the city. Without any warning they were ordered out of their temporary homes, leaving all their property behind them; and were refused permission to use beasts of burden or to take as much as a change of clothing with them. No one was to give them shelter or help, and if anyone dared to relieve their distress, he did so at the peril of his life and goods.

The bishops were in a terrible dilemma. If they stayed near Carthage, the miseries of exposure and slow starvation stared them in the face. If they returned home, not only would they involve their churches and their friends in their own ruin, but they themselves would be haled violently back, and charged with a cowardly shrinking from a hopeless contest. In their extremity they adopted a desperate course and in a body waited on the king to plead their cause. Hunneric met them at the fishponds and for a time listened to their prayers. They pointed out that they had done no harm, but had assembled for the conference according to his orders and they asked why they were thus robbed and calumniated and driven in hunger and nakedness away from their sees and homes. However their words were of no avail; the king as soon as he was tired of their complaints ordered his escort to charge, and his horse-soldiers dispersed the defenceless company of saintly old men. The majority escaped their pursuers, but many, and especially the infirm and aged, were knocked down and slain[1].

Such treatment as this appeared to the king certain to break the resolution of the oppressed bishops,

[1] Victor Vit., iv. 3.

and once more he endeavoured to gain an advantage in the politics, for which he cared, at the expense of the religion, with which he toyed. His victims were bidden meet at the Temple of Memory to receive his final offers. They were no longer to be required to accept the Arian faith and they were to return in safety to their sees, if only they would swear to obey a folded charter, now presented to them. Some wished to accept these terms; but two of their number, Hortulanus and Florentianus, stood firm, and pointed out the impossibility of accepting "like irrational animals," a document, the contents of which were hidden. Defeated in his first attempt, Hunneric threw off all disguise and set forth his demands plainly in a letter which revealed his utter insincerity. Let them swear, said he, to acknowledge his son Hilderic as his heir, or at least let them promise not to write to the Emperor at Constantinople nor to advise him to make any attempts to recover Africa, in case of civil troubles. Such proposals as these, divorced as they were from all theological points, imposed a severe temptation upon the bishops. Their opinion was divided; some wished to accept the king's proposals, the more prudent[1] to refuse. One party feared the reproaches of posterity and the accusation that they had lost their churches by their own folly; the other urged the want of all guarantee for the king's good faith, and added the curious argument that the required oath would be a contravention of our Lord's command, "Swear not at all."

Seeing that there was no hope of a definite agreement, the royal officials took down the names and

[1] "astutiores," Victor Vit.

sees of each of the two parties and imprisoned all alike. Unfortunately the long period of anxiety and privation had done its work, and this new division of opinion added mutual bitterness to the trials of the Catholics. Those who had accepted the king's terms declared that secular politics and not religion had inspired the refusal of the others; and they would find time enough to repent when banished to Corsica to cut wood for the fleet. The others replied that even if compliance had brought restoration to their sees, they would never have been allowed to resume their ecclesiastical functions, but would have been degraded to the condition of agricultural serfs[1]. In spite however of these unfortunate but very natural disputes, nearly all the bishops met the same fate. Of the 466 prelates who assembled at the conference, 302 were banished to the African deserts, 46 to Corsica, 88 perished under the weight of their hardships, and 28 managed to escape from their oppressors. Two are specially distinguished as having attained to the crown of martyrdom and the glory of confessorship[2].

The trials of Eugenius[3] have been recorded in fuller detail than those of his fellow-sufferers. Tripoli was the place of his exile where he became the mark of the enmity of the Arian clergy. Antonius, the heretical bishop of the district, proved himself a worse foe than even Hunneric and rejoiced to witness the miseries of the aged saint. The condition of Eugenius was bad enough without any added hardship. He was allowed only the coarsest food, and though delirious with fever

[1] Victor Vit., iv. 3—5. [2] Notitia at end of Victor Vitensis.
[3] Victor Vit., v. 11.

and threatened by paralysis was forced to stretch himself on the bare ground. Hearing of his illness Antonius hastened to see him, and, forcing him to drink the bitterest vinegar, laughed to hear his senseless wanderings. However, in spite of his enemies, the health of Eugenius was restored and he lived to return to his see under the milder rule of Gunthamund.

But the persecution was now no longer confined to the Catholic bishops. Hunneric had tried to deal with them all at once by collecting them at Carthage; and though a few of them seem to have been absent from the conference or to have managed to return home afterwards, these too were soon driven into exile or obliged to flee. Thus Faustus was forced to leave his see and dwell in the utmost poverty near his old church, in order that his sufferings might be increased by the scoffs of those who knew him in prosperity. For a time he was allowed to live the self-denying life of a monk; but as the fame of his virtues gathered followers round him, the Arians once more drove him forth to find a safer hiding-place[1]. Rufinian, a bishop of Byzacene, was more fortunate, for he escaped to Sicily and there founded a monastery, the reputation of which drew St Fulgentius across the sea[2].

There is no need to go in detail through the horrors of the general persecution. The last pages of Victor's narrative are filled with atrocities, only relieved by the heroism they called forth. Neither age nor sex was spared; ladies of noble rank were indeed the especial objects of violence. Mutilations, shameful indignities, tortures, murders were perpetrated on every side. Some

[1] *Vita Sit. Fulgentii*, §§ 4, 8. [2] *Ibid.*, § 13.

of the Catholics fled to the mountains and deserts, only to find a death of slow starvation[1]. Others, roused to desperation, cursed their persecutors and courted certain doom; but most were content to await in quiet the sufferings which were too surely to be their lot[2].

Two places stand out as the scene of the most systematic oppression. At Tipasa, in Mauritania Caesariensis, there were a large number of Catholics, who had probably been protected by their remoteness from Carthage and had never known the meaning of persecution. But now an Arian bishop was sent out, and all the orthodox who could fled to Spain. The few who remained refused to hide their belief and openly continued to celebrate the divine service, unmoved by either the threats or the promises of the heretical prelate. He applied to the king for aid, and a count was sent with directions to gather the Catholics from all the province of Caesariensis together and force them into submission, and even to resort to the mutilation of the right hands and tongues of those who remained obstinate. The savage orders were carried out to the letter, and some of those who suffered fled to Constantinople, where they astonished and edified all by speaking plainly though without their tongues[3].

At Carthage, the head-quarters of both Arianism

[1] Victor Vitensis, v. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 1—8.

[3] This celebrated phenomenon evidently created a great sensation at the time and has led to many discussions since. All the old historians record it; cf. Victor Vit., v. 6; Procopius, *De Bello Vand.* i. 7; Marcellinus Comes, s.a., 484; Theophanes, s.a. 526, etc. For a modern authority consult Dr Abbott who, in his *Philomythus* (pp. 19, 20), discusses the claim Cardinal Newman makes to give the event a miraculous character.

and Catholicism, the persecution was particularly severe. Eugenius had been already exiled and many of the clergy had been slain, but once more Hunneric decided to sanction that thoroughness of persecution which distinguishes his policy from that of the other Vandal kings. All the Catholic clergy of the city, to the number of five hundred, were ordered into exile, and so determined were the Arians to finally crush their rivals, that not even the boy "readers" were allowed to remain behind. At the same time the inmates of Catholic monasteries and many of the laity were persecuted. Seven monks from Capsa were brought to Carthage to suffer martyrdom, and two merchants, who were both called Frumentius, were put to death. But despite all these barbarities the Catholics of the city were not overawed. Some, it is true, apostatised, and some of these were distinguished as persecutors, but the great majority of the Catholics were moved to enthusiasm by the sufferings of the martyrs. The seven monks were visited in prison by crowds of sympathizers, and the exiled clergy were sustained on their weary march by friends, to whose ministrations the Vandals finally put an end. However, the Arians adopted measures far more likely to be effective than mere persecution, when they tried to get hold of the children of Catholics in order to bring them up in the unorthodox faith. The choristers, who were going into exile with the clergy of Carthage, were fetched back to prevent their education as Catholics, and the abduction of children became the regular practice of the Arians[1].

There were, for all the fanaticism of the Vandals,

[1] Victor Vit., v. 9, 10, 14.

country districts, where the overwhelming numbers of the Catholics made the effectual establishment of heresy impossible. The wildest extravagance was shewn in the Arian attempts to gain a footing here. For, ignoring altogether the necessity of converting the people to their tenets, and unable to force them to attend their churches, they devoted all their attention to baptizing according to the heretical rite. Led by a bishop or priest, the Arians would surround a village by night and arouse the inhabitants to be re-baptized. Certificates of Arian baptism were required of all travellers, or they were detained to submit to the rite, and even men sleeping by the roadside were awakened by consecrated water falling on their faces and an Arian formula hurriedly muttered over them. While some of the Catholics treated these tactics with the contempt they deserved, the remorse of others and their strange self-inflicted penances proved how accurately the Vandals had estimated the great importance ascribed by the majority of Africans to mere external ceremonies[1].

Though nothing can palliate the indifference of Hunneric to the atrocities committed in his kingdom, he must not be classed among those misguided if honest bigots, who have caused suffering for what they believed to be the truth. In religious matters he was a Gallio, and let things take their own course, because the Catholics, whose support he had sought at the risk of offending his own race, had spurned his offers and thwarted his policy. He considered that their sufferings might well regain for him the allegiance of the Vandals. For all his callousness, the Catholics

[1] Victor Vit., v. 13.

did not regard him as their bitterest foe. Habetdeus, bishop of Tamalla, oppressed by Antonius, the chief persecutor of Eugenius, appealed to the king directly for protection for the Church. Hunneric, in reply, did not justify the persecution, but simply disclaimed responsibility and referred his petitioner to the Arian hierarchy. From them of course Habetdeus got no satisfaction and in despair returned to exile, while Antonius redoubled his persecutions, secure of the indifference if not of the favour of the king[1].

Once indeed Hunneric took an open part in the atrocities. The emperor Zeno sent a legate, Uranius, to remonstrate with the tyrant, and the king ordered worse tortures to be prepared and publicly exhibited to the ambassador as he passed along to the royal palace[2]. But this barbarity was evidently for a political purpose and was dictated by desire to flout the emperor rather than by any feeling of bigotry. The cruelties of his reign have for ever branded Hunneric with the name of a heartless tyrant, and Victor of Vite did not go beyond the truth when he called him "illa bestia[3]."

Most happily for the Catholic Church the days of its trials were as short as they were terrible, and its special sufferings were perhaps alleviated by a fearful calamity that befell all the land. In the last year of Hunneric no rain fell and day after day the pitiless sun beat down upon the hard-baked earth. Even the rivers ceased to flow and all the grass was burnt up. The harvests of corn, hay, and fruit alike failed, and

[1] Victor Vit., v. 16. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 7. [3] *Ibid.*, v. 1.

man and beast were exposed to starvation. The whole structure of society fell to pieces, agriculture and commerce were neglected, and the country was scoured in every direction in the vain search for food. Families were scattered, slaves left their masters, and the richest Vandals were reduced to the utmost want. And now pestilence followed in the footsteps of famine. The heaps of dead, neglected by the weakened survivors, lay unburied and corrupted the air, and multitudes fell sick and died on every side. In their despair the starving people fled to Carthage, but Hunneric fearing the infection of pestilence ordered the gates to be shut, and fugitives refused admission fell dead by the roadside on their way home. The two scourges of famine and plague wrought such havoc, that populous villages were swept away, and a deep silence pervaded the untenanted houses[1].

The horrors of this autumn must have distracted the attention of the most virulent Arians from the Catholics, and the sudden death[2] of the king, on 13 December, 484, secured them against the revival of the persecution in its full vigour. This respite was most opportune. Not even the African Church with all its national earnestness could have for long withstood the terrible weapons brought against it. Not only were the Catholics threatened with the most barbarous tortures, they were also deprived of their spiritual guides and exposed to every civil disability.

[1] Victor Vit., v. 17.

[2] Prosper Tyro (*Theodosio et Festo Coss*) says he was eaten by worms; Isidorus Hispalensis (*Hist. Vand.* § 79) and Victor Tunnunensis (s.a. 478) say that he died the death of Arius.

Active persecution alone might have revived their enthusiasm, but the Vandals had now long realized that it was dangerous to put a martyr to death. Hunneric had directed against them the terrible grinding oppression of the State, devised by the great Theodosius, and it is almost impossible to believe that any Church could have resisted such pressure for long through respect for a doctrinal point however important. Even if those Catholics, most distinguished for their life and learning, had held to their faith, the great mass of the laity would have drifted away. Indeed many had already done so, and the Synod at the Lateran of 487 or 488 was entirely concerned with the terms upon which the lapsed should be allowed to return[1]. These weaker brethren were of every rank, and included bishops, priests and laymen vowed to a religious life; and two of the most bitter of the Arian persecutors are said to have been renegades from Catholicism[2].

On the other hand it is evident that the persecution ended too soon to do any serious harm to the Church. The enthusiasm of the people of Carthage has already been mentioned, and it was not altogether confined to the native Africans. Two Vandals left all their wealth and accompanied the clergy of Carthage into exile[3], and in the days of Thrasamund there is additional evidence that the Catholics had won the admiration and respect of the more thoughtful of their conquerors. Once more, too, the social and civil importance of the orthodox comes out; though the

[1] Hefele, *History of Councils of Church*, vol. iv. § 215.
[2] Victor Vit., v. 9, 10. [3] *Ibid.*, v. 10.

victims of Hunneric were not picked out like those of Gaiseric, on account of their prominence and notoriety. Two were connected with the king's own service, Dagila the wife of the royal butler, and Victorian the intimate friend and trusted adviser of Hunneric himself, who held the responsible post of Proconsul of Carthage[1]. With Catholics in such a position as this the Arians must have realized that they were far indeed from the time when the Church of Carthage would be no more.

[1] Victor Vit., v. 8, 4.

CHAPTER VI.

The Decline and Fall of the Vandals.

The keynote of the policy of Hunneric was the desire to secure the succession of his son. For this he had toiled, for this he had estranged the Vandals, and for this he had persecuted the Catholics. But the rules of inheritance, laid down by Gaiseric and approved by the customs of the Teutonic race, prevailed and all his efforts came to naught. Gunthamund, the son of Genzo, was the eldest male of the royal stock, and to him, as a matter of right, the throne belonged.

For twelve inglorious years the new king reigned, but did little worth recording. He was not the man to stem the tide of decay or to restore the *prestige* of his people. The Moors steadily pressed forward, gaining power in the southern frontiers, until even the heart of Byzacene was not safe from their marauding expeditions. St Fulgentius found Telepte, on the borders of Byzacene and Numidia, exposed to their raids, and Ididi, in Mauritania Caesariensis, regularly under their control[1]. A bishop from the latter district was slain by one of their plundering parties[2]. With such difficulties

[1] *Vita S. Fulgentii*, §§ 9, 11. [2] *C. I. L.* vol. VIII. 9286.

at home it was natural that the Vandals suffered equally abroad. Theoderic, the new master of Italy, was able to stipulate that their attacks on Sicily should cease at the very moment he repudiated the tribute, promised by Odoacer for that island[1].

Though from the political standpoint the reign of Gunthamund appears utterly inglorious, the position of the Catholics was greatly improved. The king himself was not a persecutor, and only the circumstances of the time prevented him from extending open toleration to the Church. At first he had not a free hand; his succession was disputed, and if he had seemed less zealous than his predecessor in the Arian cause, he might have lost the support of the heretical hierarchy and with it his kingdom. For three years he dared not check the persecution, and for a time even greater brutalities were perpetrated than in the days of Hunneric[2].

But once Gunthamund was securely seated on the throne and safe from the attacks of his enemies, he was able to consult his own wishes and shew mercy to the Catholics. Yet he did nothing suddenly and a change of policy was initiated with the greatest caution. There was no general recall of the exiled clergy, nor were the forfeited churches at once restored; but the return of Eugenius, who had won the respect of all Africa—Vandal, orthodox and heretic alike—was not prevented, and in 487, the Church of the Holy Martyr Agileus and its burying-ground were given

[1] Papencordt, *Geschichte der Vandalen*, p. 119.

[2] Procopius, *De Bello Vand.*, I. 7; Gelasius, *Ep.* 13; Theophanes, *Chron.*, s.a., 526.

back to the Catholics of the metropolitan city. For seven years little more was done and no general toleration was shewn. But on August 10, 494, on the petition of Eugenius himself, all the other clergy were recalled and the churches reopened, after they had been closed for eleven years, six months and eight days[1]. Although there had been seven years' delay in the granting of a full measure of toleration, the trend of events and public opinion had already foreshadowed the action of the king. So many Catholics, who had lapsed or been rebaptized willingly or unwillingly, had sought readmission to the Church, that either in 487 or 488 Pope Felix I. had held a special synod at the Lateran to consider the terms on which the penitents could be received[2].

Although the king himself does not seem to have been indifferent to the rights of his orthodox subjects, it was not easy to restrain the violence of the Arians. St Fulgentius, the future Bishop of Ruspe, in this reign entered upon his life of monastic devotion and was a member of several religious communities in different parts of the country. Wherever he went he was exposed to the attacks of the local Arians or the marauding Moors, and at last in despair he removed to Ididi, in Mauritania, believing that even barbarians were less dangerous neighbours than fanatical heretics. Yet some of the Arians protected the Catholics, for when Felix, a heretic priest, beat Fulgentius on the charge of converting the Vandals, he was checked by an Arian

[1] Prosper Tyro, VII., *Theodosio et Festo Coss*; Victor Tunn., s.a., 478.

[2] Hefele, vol. IV. § 215.

bishop, and a few years later, the "primarius" of Byzacene built him a monastery in a peaceful spot far from the possibility of any molestation[1].

The position of the Church under Gunthamund may be summed up as a state of insecure toleration, but the feeble support of the king was sufficient to induce a people satiated with cruelty to permit the restoration of the Catholic clergy. But on the part of the Catholics the greatest care was necessary, as any fanatical Arian could still incite the mob to repeat the horrors of the days of Hunneric. For two years and one month after the reopening of the churches, Gunthamund continued to reign; but on 24 September, 496, he died and was succeeded by Thrasamund, his brother[2].

The history of the new reign marks a gradual alteration in the character and position of the conquerors of Africa. More than half a century had passed since the fall of Carthage and the Vandals were now accepted as regular members of the family of nations, admitted to friendly intercourse, not only by the invaders of Italy but by the Eastern emperors, all idea of a reconquest of the old province seeming to have been definitely abandoned by the Imperial government. But more important than their altered relations with other nations was the subtle change in the Vandal character. The apparent security of their position and their growing intercourse with nations more civilized than themselves corrupted the primitive simplicity of the Vandal conquerors. The desperate courage that had inspired them to subdue Africa and harry the

[1] *Vita Sti. Fulg.*, §§ 4, 8—11, 14.

[2] Prosper Tyro, VII., *Theodosio et Festo Coss.*

shores of the Mediterranean dwindled under the combined influences of security and luxury, nor did the Vandals in losing the virtues of barbarous warriors gain the arts of peace. Under a veneer of civilization they were as cruel as ever, but fraud was employed in pursuit of their desires in the place of the ferocious bravery of their ancestors. The policy of Thrasamund shewed none of the straightforwardness for which his race had once been celebrated. He tried to convert the Catholics by promises rather than by violence; and proved himself incapable of recognising that advantages gained by a treaty ought to carry with them their attendant obligations.

Thrasamund indeed was the first Vandal monarch to pay much attention to foreign alliances. Gaiseric had occasionally urged the other invaders of the Empire on to effect a diversion when he was in danger, and both he and Hunneric, whilst never suffering outside dictation, had permitted Imperial ambassadors to visit Carthage. But now almost cordial relations were set up with the court of Constantinople, and a matrimonial alliance was contracted with the master of Italy. The Eastern Emperor Anastasius negotiated several treaties with Thrasamund, and doubtless Procopius is only reflecting the popular feeling of the time when he praises the Vandal king for his dignity and good looks and the prudence and magnanimity of his rule[1].

But, whatever were the relations between Constantinople and Carthage, they had far less effect upon the fortunes of Africa than the marriage of Thrasamund to Amalafrida, the sister of Theoderic, who brought

[1] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, i. 7.

with her a body-guard of 5000 men, of whom 1000 were picked Goths, whilst her dowry of Lilybæum gave the Vandals a foothold once more in Sicily[1]. Thrasamund proved an unsatisfactory ally, and received Gesalic, the natural son of Alaric II., who was fleeing from his brother-in-law. A vigorous protest reminded him of his breach of faith and he was compelled to make ample apologies[2].

In spite of the claim now advanced by the Vandals to a position in the community of states, they were really growing daily weaker. No foreign alliances, no royal interchange of presents could make up for the drain on their strength in the south. The Moors still pressed on, and in Tripoli the army defending the frontiers did more harm to the Catholics than to the enemy. Wherever they went they made the churches of the orthodox stables for their flocks and herds, beat the priests and forced them to perform menial services; but when they met Cabao, the local Berber chief, they experienced a crushing defeat. Their conduct had not been unobserved and their conqueror sent men to follow on their track, with orders to try and repair the damage they had done by cleaning the churches, re-lighting the lamps, and distributing alms. Cabao was not a Christian; but, connecting the defeat of the Vandals with their sacrilege, he hoped to gain the favour of the God rejected by his enemies[3].

Still more menacing to the Vandal power than occasional border raids was the kingdom set up on

[1] Procop., *loc. cit.*; Theophanes, s.a., 526.

[2] Cassiodorus, *Var.*, v. 43, 4.

[3] Procopius, *loc. cit.*

their frontiers by Moors and disaffected coloni. In 508, Masuna, a Berber chief, established an independent state with a curious medley of institutions. The influence of Rome prevailed so far that the language and Imperial style were officially adopted, but the two races composing the population of the state were to live side by side under their own laws and magistrates. Masgivin, præfect of Sufar, ruled the Moors, Maximus, procurator of Altava, governed the Romans[1]. Of the later history of this curious federation nothing is known, but it must have come to an end with the reconquest of Africa by Justinian. However, this circumstance is equally a testimony to the gradual decay of the Vandal power.

In his religious as well as in his foreign policy Thrasamund shewed the same divergence from the ideas of his predecessors. The Vandal king no longer sought to inspire fear by persecution, but preferred to work on other motives. Little actual violence mars his reign, his policy being to convert his Catholic subjects by making Arianism a condition of worldly success. With profound knowledge of men, Thrasamund determined to ignore the existence of the Church and to shut all avenues of promotion to those who clung to the orthodox faith. If a Catholic forswore his creed, he was sure of large rewards and rich offices, and if anyone incurred his displeasure, adoption of Arianism extenuated every crime. But for a time at least the Church was left unmolested[2].

As, however, Thrasamund found this method of

[1] *C. I. L.*, VIII. 9835 ; Boissier, *L'Afrique Romaine*, VII. § 5.

[2] Procopius, *l.c.*

conversion abortive he ultimately reverted to the traditional policy of his predecessors. About 504[1] he issued a decree that as bishops died their places were not to be refilled. For a time the Church acquiesced in the royal command; but as its sees were one after another left vacant its position became intolerable and a general feeling of desperation arose. It was felt more advisable to risk the outburst of royal fury by disobedience than to permit the Church to die out by acquiescence in his commands. The surviving bishops of Byzacene accordingly met together, about the year 508, and decided to fill up at once all empty sees; considering that in any case the Catholics would be benefited by a bold policy. If Thrasamund's wrath was by this time appeased, the organization would be safely restored; if the persecution was renewed, they would gladly endure it, secure in their knowledge of the bracing effect of adversity.

The resolution once taken was promptly carried out. No diocese and no parish wished in such a matter to seem to lag behind, and sometimes more haste than discretion was shewn. Soon all Byzacene was filled with newly ordained clergy and very few sees remained vacant[2]. But one diocese was still pastorless and for a most unusual cause. The men of Ruspe[3] had elected the saintly Fulgentius as their bishop, but could not

[1] For the dates of the decree and the exile of the bishops I follow the chronology of Ruinart, *History of the Persecution of the Vandals*, xi. 3, and Hefele, *Hist. of the Councils of the Church*, iv. 221, but at best they are very uncertain.

[2] *Vita S. Fulgentii*, § 16.

[3] Ruspe, not far from Syrtis Parva, 35° 1′ lat. N., 11° 1′ long. E.

find him when they sought to consecrate him, for he, preferring a life of monastic self-devotion to any office however important, managed to escape their importunities and hide himself away. Meanwhile an eager candidate appeared on the scene. Felix, a deacon, had none of the scruples of the great monk and did not hesitate to try to secure consecration by the influence of the procurator of the district, who was a friend of his family. His efforts were unsuccessful, and as soon as the retreat of Fulgentius was found he was forced to become bishop, by the representations of Victor, the primate of the province himself[1].

At such a time as this consecration brought as much danger as honour, and before long the new prelates had to pay a heavy price for their elevation. Thrasamund was not the man to tamely submit to open disobedience, and as soon as the general consecration had taken place Victor was summoned to Carthage to explain the action of the Church. No defence that he could give satisfied the king, and a decree of exile went forth against the new episcopate. From Byzacene 60 bishops and many monks and clergy were conveyed to Sardinia[2], and there they were joined by others from the rest of Africa, until 120 prelates altogether were banished[3]. Though exiled they were not otherwise ill-treated. They were not indeed supplied

[1] *Vita S. Fulg.*, § 17. [2] *Vita S. Fulg.*, §§ 16, 20.

[3] The authorities are not agreed on the numbers of the exiles. The author of the *Vita Sancti Fulgentii* gives the number from Byzacene as above. Victor of Tunno (s. a. 497) and Isidorus Hispalensis (*Hist. Vand.* § 81) say 120, without mentioning their provinces. Other authorities give 225 or 230, but 120 has the best support.

with food, and had to depend on the charity of Pope Symmachus, but they were left to employ themselves as they chose. With two of his fellow-sufferers Fulgentius founded a monastery, and occupied himself in answering the questions and dissolving the doubts of many correspondents on theological points[1]. Besides the exiles to Sardinia some may have been driven to other places; Eugenius was perhaps one of them. He died in 505, soon after the active persecution began[2], and is said to have ended his days at Vienne in Gaul[3].

Towards the end of his reign Thrasamund's policy towards the Catholics underwent another change. Perhaps the needs of his foreign or domestic policy, perhaps a sincere desire to ascertain the truth, impelled him to summon Fulgentius, the most eminent of the exiles, to Carthage to argue the doctrines of Catholicism with the Arian divines. The conference did no good; and though according to his biographer the great bishop evaded all the traps laid for him by the king, he could not convert his opponents and was sent back to Sardinia. Still the account of the visit of Fulgentius to the capital of the Vandals is very remarkable. He was treated well and allowed to live in his own lodgings. No restriction was placed on his preaching, and he is said to have not only comforted the Catholics but to have won over many of the unbelievers. When the time of his departure came round Thrasamund, fearing a popular demonstration, arranged that he should sail by night. However, the elements defeated the royal plans, for the wind veered round and carried the vessel back to land,

[1] *Vita S. Fulgentii*, §§ 20, 26.

[2] Victor Tunn., s.a., 505.

[3] Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.*, II. 2.

where great crowds had assembled to bid Fulgentius God-speed[1]. No doubt the narrative is one-sided and overcoloured; but unless the whole story is rejected as incredible, the remarkable fact stands out that in the stronghold of the Vandals, under the eyes of an Arian king, great multitudes of Catholics dared to collect and defy the whole power of the State. Thrasamund tried to defeat, not to suppress, their enthusiasm, and it is clear that even eighty years of spasmodic persecution had not made it safe for the Vandal monarchs to openly brave the wrath of the Catholics, when roused. Such is not the record of a declining Church.

On 25th of May, 523, died Thrasamund after a reign of 26 years, 8 months and 6 days[2]. On his deathbed he was full of misgiving for the fate of his kingdom, as his successor Hilderic, son of Hunneric, no doubt influenced by the teachings of his mother Eudocia, was known to favour the Catholics. To try to tie the hands of his successor was therefore the last care of the dying Thrasamund, and he made Hilderic swear a solemn oath that when king he would not recall the exiles or reopen their churches. As soon as he was dead his plans came to nought. Hilderic, with the subterfuge that formed a great part of his nature, devised a means to break the spirit, while he kept the letter of his oath. There was a short interval between the death of one king and the formal acknowledgement of the next, during which the king elect would have the supreme authority *de facto* but not *de jure*. In this Hilderic saw his opportunity; while he wielded

[1] *Vita S. Fulg.*, §§ 21—5.

[2] Prosper Tyro, VII., *Theodosio et Festo Coss.*

the power of the king, but was not yet king, he issued an edict restoring the banished clergy, proclaiming religious toleration, and making Boniface bishop of Carthage[1].

Throughout his reign Hilderic continued to favour the Catholics and the Church enjoyed perfect rest. Boniface was consecrated in the Church of St Agileus, the historic cathedral of Carthage, and the ecclesiastical organization was restored. There was indeed urgent need for reform after nigh a century of persecution, during which period the Church had struggled for bare existence, with her clergy exiled or slain, her monasteries harried, and her prelates driven far away from their sees. Much of the old organization had been destroyed and some perhaps forgotten; the rules of ecclesiastical government were disordered, and two points in particular called for settlement. The boundaries of dioceses and the respective rank of the diocesans needed regulation, and the extent to which the episcopate could claim authority over monks was a question fruitful of many disputes.

No doubt while the persecution lasted, nice distinctions as to the districts under the charge of a bishop had not been made, and the Catholics had been willing to accept the ministrations of any prelate without enquiring the exact limits of his diocese. But now brighter days had dawned and such questions assumed a real importance. At a provincial synod at Junca, in Byzacene, in 523 or 524, Liberatus, the primate of the province, complained of the encroachments of Vincentius, bishop of Girba, in Tripoli; while

[1] Victor Tunn., s.a., 523; Isidor. Hispal., *Hist. Vand.*, § 82.

at the conference of all the African bishops at Carthage in 525, Liberatus himself was rebuked for claiming part of the proconsular province.

At Junca, the precedence of individual bishops was also considered. Fulgentius was placed before a certain Quodvultdeus; but as this seriously annoyed the latter, the Bishop of Ruspe got the decree altered at the synod held at Sufes in the following year[1]. More important was the decision of the precedence of the episcopate of the various provinces made at the great council of Carthage already mentioned. On February 5, 525, sixty bishops from every part of Africa met in the sacristy of the Church of St Agileus under the presidency of Boniface. The claims of Carthage to be the premier see were first enforced, and it was then decided that the bishops of the other provinces should rank in the following order: Proconsularis, Numidia, Byzacene. The omission of the names of Tripoli, Caesariensis and Sitifensis, though representatives were present from them, perhaps bears witness to the encroachments of the Moors, and the loss of these provinces to civilization and Christianity.

The second problem calling for solution was the position of religious communities with regard to their diocesan. The exile of so many clergy to the deserts, and the resort of fugitives to inaccessible spots, had no doubt caused a considerable development of African monasticism, and the restored bishops wished to have control of the monasteries within their dioceses. Liberatus had thus come into collision with a certain

[1] *Vita S. Fulg.*, § 29.

Abbat Peter, and the matter was discussed both at Junca and Carthage. The claims of the Primate of Byzacene were defeated on geographical grounds alone; the monastery was not in Byzacene, and the appeal for aid from that bishop was only due to the fact that the see of Carthage was at that time vacant. But the conference was not content with the decision of the particular case, but passing on to consider the whole question decreed that, as the religious communities were composed of men from all parts of Africa, and even of foreigners, the local diocesan was not to have any right whatever to interfere in monastic affairs[1].

While the Church thus was able to set its house in order, the reign of Hilderic was the most inglorious the Vandals had yet seen. Their king proved by his character how hard it is for even the most vigorous race of barbarians to withstand the enervating effects of a too luxurious civilization. His treatment of the Catholics, the one meritorious act recorded of Hilderic, revealed a lack of moral courage, apparent alike in his foreign and domestic policy. As treacherous as he was timid, the king, who dreaded the very name of war, had no scruples to hinder him from resorting to acts of secret violence. The defence of the kingdom was handed over to Hoamer, the "Achilles of the Vandals," but with no success. Antalas defeated the frontier armies, and the Leucathae captured Leptis Magna and Sabrata in Tripoli, and again invaded Byzacene[2].

[1] For these two Councils, see Hefele, Vol. iv. §§ 236, 238.

[2] Procopius, *De Bell. Vand.*, i. 9; *De Aedif.*, vi. 3; Theophanes, s.a. 526.

The Vandals viewed their humiliation with disgust. Even if policy was in favour of cultivating the friendship of Justinian, nothing could excuse in their eyes the partiality shewn to the Catholics and the neglect to guard the frontiers of the kingdom. Amalafrida, the spirited widow of Thrasamund, took advantage of their discontent, and headed a revolt soon after her husband's death. Beaten at the battle of Capsa, she was thrown into prison and, in 526, on the death of her powerful brother, Theoderic, foully murdered. His successor, Athalaric, the new king of the Goths in Italy, was not the man to see his royal house insulted without protest, and wrote to remonstrate with Hilderic. As Africa was still thought to be too strong to be safely attacked, no action followed the letter; but the position of the Vandal monarch was materially weakened and he could expect no help from the Goths in the hour of need[1], which was soon destined to come upon him.

When he had reigned eight years and a few days, Gelimer, the nephew of Thrasamund, tired of his mild and cowardly rule, raised an insurrection and made himself king. Hilderic, with Hoamer and his brother, Evagees, were cast into prison, and a reign of terror ensued. Many of the great Vandal nobles were slain, many lost their property, and the tyrant's rage included even the members of his own family[2].

Although it is nowhere recorded that Gelimer ill-treated the Catholics, it is more than likely that he

[1] Cassiodorus, *Var. ep.*, ix.; cf. Hodgkin's edition and notes.

[2] Isidor. Hispal., *Hist. Vand.*, § 83; Prosper Tyro, *loc. cit.*; Procop., *De Bell. Vand.*, i. 9.

did. He had attracted many Vandals to his side by condemning Hilderic's friendship with Constantinople, and an easy and popular means of proving his sincerity would be a new persecution.

The usurper was not left long to enjoy his new kingdom. Justinian, the great Emperor of the East, on the pretext of avenging his ally, seized the opportunity to recover the important province of Africa for the Empire. Twice he sent embassies to expostulate with Gelimer, and as their only results were further hardships for the prisoners, Belisarius was despatched to conquer the land. He landed at Caput Vada in September 533, captured Carthage within a fortnight, and before the next spring was master of all Africa. The Vandal domination had passed away for ever and the Church had emerged from her days of bitter trial.

For over a century Africa, cut off from the Roman Empire, had been under the sway of barbarians, whose Arianism made them doubly odious. Catholicism as the creed of the conquered was proscribed as much for political as for theological reasons. To be a Catholic was to be the opponent of the Vandal régime, to be an Arian to acquiesce at least in the power of the conquerors. Yet although for a century the schemes of statesmen and the hatred of theologians had sought to destroy the Church, the resolution of the Catholics had withstood all attacks and had completely foiled the hopes of the heretics. The Catholics were not uprooted and the Arians had not gained a foothold. Again and again had wholesale proscriptions been ordered, again and again had edicts been issued to degrade the Catholics,

exile their clergy, close their churches, and confiscate their property. The very frequency of the orders proves their futility. Few of the Vandals themselves wished for their execution. For what had they to gain by a systematic persecution of the orthodox? The vast mass of the population were Catholics, and on Catholics therefore the Vandals depended for their wealth, their amusements, and even their administration. To a barbarian race, the complicated system of Roman government was entirely new, and Gaiseric shewed himself a true statesman by leaving the Civil Service in the hands of the conquered Africans. The destruction of the Catholics, therefore, meant the disruption of the whole order of society, and could only have been accomplished by the help of the Catholics themselves. No doubt the Arian clergy as a whole hated the orthodox, not, it must be confessed, unnaturally, if the treatment of heretics within the Empire is remembered. But even amongst them there were exceptions, and all the efforts of the Vandal hierarchy were more fertile in isolated barbarities than effectual proscriptions.

Most of the Vandal kings looked upon the rival sects as mere pawns in the political game. Leaning on the whole towards Arianism, none of them shewed any deep theological conviction. Gaiseric saw the inherent connection of Catholicism and Imperialism, and knew that if the Vandals were to remain masters of Africa, Arianism must be the dominant religion. But he was content with that; as long as the orthodox Church did not try to make converts, or to assert its power, he did not wish to destroy it. In fact as long as it existed, it was a convenient hostage for the safety of his kingdom; and,

when he did persecute, Gaiseric preferred to alarm the Byzantine court by the execution of a single courtier, rather than to weaken the Church by an indiscriminate persecution of Catholic bishops. Hunneric alternately favoured and persecuted Catholicism, as his policy demanded. Gunthamund recalled the exiles. Thrasamund tried persuasion before violence. Hilderic was weakly in favour of the Church and Gelimer, if he persecuted orthodoxy, persecuted all Africa. In no case does it appear that a Vandal king was filled with fanaticism or perhaps any real religious conviction.

In fact the only period during which the Catholics were in danger of extermination was the last few months of Hunneric's reign. They had crossed his policy and had to pay the penalty by being exposed to the full fury of Arian hate and systematic proscription. However, mercifully for the Church, the days of their enemy were suddenly cut short and Gunthamund befriended them as soon as he could. From his accession onwards the lot of the Church was much improved; not indeed because it had made much progress in the favour of the Vandals, but because the whole attitude of conquerors and conquered had altered. The generation which had driven out Boniface had long passed away, and to the contemporaries of Gunthamund and Thrasamund the ravagings of the Mediterranean were already a tradition. Luxury and civilization were doing their work, and making tortures and exile more and more repugnant to the indolent Vandals. From the very first the conquerors had treated their domestic slaves with some consideration, and as time went on Vandal and African no doubt regarded each other as

necessary to their own existence. With improved social relations, religious toleration must have increased, and the methods of the last great persecutor Thrasamund betray a desire to avoid violence as much as possible.

The Vandal persecution had therefore failed, as perhaps in any case it must have done, owing to the immense majority of the Catholics over the Arians. But still its effects were great. A Church cannot be harassed for more than a century and be deprived again and again of its leaders without suffering greatly from disorganization and disorder. As has already been said, the very boundaries of sees and the precedence of bishops had been confused and some friction occurred before they could be arranged. But of vital harm the Church had received absolutely none. Some of its insincere members had indeed fallen away and some of the faithful had been forcibly rebaptized. On the other hand it had gained some recruits from the ranks of its enemies. But far more important was the spirit of enthusiastic loyalty aroused by its sufferings and the determination to keep unimpaired the Creed which had cost so dear. In the height of the persecution crowds of Catholics had dared to defy the Vandal kings, and with the same devotion the Church of Africa henceforth withstood every unorthodox assault. As far as our scanty records tell, from the time of the reconquest of the Province no suspicion of heresy ever lighted on the Carthaginian Church. This unique boast is no doubt due to its century of resistance to the Arian attack.

Although the Catholics emerged from the Vandal domination untainted by heresy, the Church did not

escape the damage done to all the Province by a very different foe. Never again did the Emperors rule over all the old boundaries of Africa. Church and Province alike lost ground by the resistless advance of the terrible Moors.

CHAPTER VII.

From Justinian to the Saracens.

Though the success of Belisarius was as decisive as it was sudden, the capture of Carthage did not end the troubles of Africa. The Vandals, it is true, disappeared, but they left their legacy of mischief behind. For a time Carthage recovered a semblance of its past glories, and again saw its harbour crowded with the navies of the world. For a time too the whole Province seemed to shew marvellous recuperative powers, and with the towns rebuilt under a reorganized government, seemed destined to enjoy its old prosperity.

However, despite appearances, neither the efforts of the Emperors nor the valour of their soldiers could for long postpone the inevitable decay. The stability of a country depends after all upon its internal resources and its capital should be the apex and not the basis of its power. With Roman Africa the reverse was the case. All depended on the external resources of the Empire and all places looked to Carthage as the source of their prosperity. Had the body politic really been sound, every village and hamlet in Africa would have helped to swell the glories of the great city; but as

things were, it was Carthage that had to provide government and security for every part of the Province; and its luxury and magnificence hardly extended beyond its own gates. The country districts contributed nothing to its real stability, but merely supplied it with riches to squander. But though year by year the Romans were driven back by the Moors and less and less territory was held by the imperial forces, to outsiders Africa seemed strong, for Carthage was still magnificent. Nor was it till the city itself was actually destroyed that men recognized that no effective resistance could be offered to a determined foe by a province dependent on a decadent empire, and trusting only in its stores of accumulated wealth.

Although Africa had been regained for the Empire with surprising ease, a period of the most terrible trial ensued. For twelve years the struggle between Moor and Roman, barbarism and civilization, paganism and Christianity went on, and it was only in 546 that the internecine strife sank into a chronic state of border warfare.

The Vandals indeed gave little trouble after the capture of Gelimer. Of the men, 160,000 were slain in the two great victories of Belisarius[1]; and the rest were either drafted into the imperial army as auxiliaries, or seeking refuge amongst the Moors ceased to exist as a separate people. The women were still left and were taken in marriage by the conquering soldiers, but the Arian ecclesiastics were not easily got rid of. But though these survivors at first caused some disturbances, it was not long before they were swallowed up

[1] Procopius, *Anecdota*, xviii.

in the mass of the provincials and within a generation all trace of the former masters of Africa had completely passed away.

The twelve years, which were to pass before the Province was at rest, fall naturally into four well-marked periods. In the first, from 534 to 535, the reconquest of Africa is continued; in the second, from 536 to 539, the revolts of the army and the pacification of Numidia call for all the energies of the provincial government; in the third, from 539 to 543, the work of reorganization went rapidly forward under the strong rule of Solomon; while the fourth period, to 546, saw Africa given up to desolation and tyranny[1].

In Byzacene Solomon, who vigorously set himself to drive back the Moors, met with complete success though not without considerable loss, and on two occasions the barbarians ravaged the entire province. Within a year, however, of the recapture of Carthage the only Berbers within the boundaries of the Eastern part of this province were the friendly tribes of Antalas. In Numidia, the imperial forces had a more chequered career. A chief called Iabdas had securely established himself upon the almost impregnable Aurasius, and from there raided the plains at his pleasure, and in particular destroyed Timgad. At his first attempt, Solomon failed to capture this natural citadel and was disabled from renewing his attack by a revolt in his rear.

For in 536, the imperial army suddenly rose in mutiny. The Roman legionaries had long been

[1] The authority for this period of misrule is Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico*, ii. 8–28.

drawn from every nation within and even beyond the borders of the Empire. Some had married Vandal women and were stirred up by their wives, disgusted at the loss of the estates which their countrymen had long occupied in security; some were Arians and were discontented at the proscription of their creed; and the sudden appearance of 400 Vandals, who had deserted from the imperial forces, in the mountains of Aurasius and Mauritania, brought the disaffection to a head. Two-thirds of the army threw off their allegiance, drove Solomon from Africa, pillaged Carthage, and retired to Numidia under a leader called Stutza. Here they were joined by the Moors and the whole country was once more ravaged, till Germanus attacked and put the confederates to rout. In 539, Solomon returned and at once set about the capture of Aurasius, and this time attained his object[1]. The Moors were driven out; a permanent garrison was established and Numidia at length had peace.

During the next four years the whole province was left unharassed by raids, and Solomon undertook the much needed work of reorganization. During the century of Vandal domination much had been done which had now to be altered and the Province had fallen into a defenceless condition. As soon as the conquest was complete, steps were taken to reimpose the land-tax,

[1] Procop., *De Bello Vand.*, ii. 18—21; see also *C. I. L.*, vol. VIII. 9738. In the mountains of Caesarea El. Mansour found this inscription: "I am Solomon the Serdeghos (στρατηγός). The people of the town having revolted, the King sent me against them; and God having permitted me to conquer them, I have had this monument erected to perpetuate my memory." Ibn Khaldoun (Slane), i. 234; ii. 539.

and the lands given by Gaiseric to his followers were seized for the imperial treasury. Both these measures caused great discontent; for the tax had been so long remitted that its assessment was forgotten and the army of Belisarius thought that the estates of the Vandals ought to be their perquisite. Moreover, the levying of such taxes was the occasion of the greatest oppression, and it may fairly be questioned whether the African coloni were not in all but religious affairs better off under the Vandal than the Imperial rule.

Far more beneficial to the whole Province were the measures taken to secure its defence. The Vandals had been unable to keep back the Moors, and, with extreme shortsightedness, Gaiseric had prevented his subjects from defending themselves by destroying the fortifications of every town but Carthage. Consequently, when the Moors overran the land, the wretched border-towns had had to resist as best they could with hasty barricades thrown up across the streets. Justinian was however a mighty builder, and he set to work at once to refortify his frontiers. The actual date of his works is unrecorded, but it is unlikely that so good a soldier as Solomon allowed this time of respite to slip by without beginning at any rate fortifications against the Moors. In Tripoli, Leptis Magna and Sabrata were surrounded with a wall. In Proconsularis the defences of Carthage were improved, Baga was refortified, and the castle of Tucca was built. In Byzacene walls were built at the capital Hadrumetum, Caputvada, Telepte, Mamma and Cululis on the frontier, and the armed camp of Aumetera was formed. In Numidia, Mount Aurasius was strongly occupied, and Timgad and other

neighbouring cities were rebuilt; while in far-off Gades, the castle of Septa was constructed. Besides these military works many churches were erected in these cities. At Carthage, public baths and the Maritime Colonnade of the Forum, were built, while the monastery of Mandracium, which towered above the harbour with the strength of a fortress, bespoke the lordly ideas of the emperor[1].

No doubt such enormous buildings as these were the work of many years, and they cannot have been finished, when the peace of Africa was once more broken. For four years the Moors had seemed to accept the Imperial domination in comparative quiet. If Solomon had been able to govern personally the whole Province, all might have been well; but in 543 the treachery of the young governor of Tripoli alienated the friendly tribes. In a moment the south-eastern districts were in a blaze, and all the discontented united in one last effort to throw off the Imperial yoke. Stutza and the few surviving Vandals reappeared; even the Antalas turned against the emperor, and many of the country people, disgusted with the tyranny and extortion of the new rule, were willing to aid the insurgents. Byzacene was ravaged far and wide, and Solomon was defeated and slain by this formidable coalition. All Africa seemed about to share the fate of the south-east, and in despair those who could fled to Sicily or Constantinople. However, division soon sprang up amongst the rebels. One upstart after another seized the supreme power, was attacked and fell, and for three years the utmost

[1] Procopius, *De Aedif.*, vi. 3–6.

confusion reigned. Carthage and the Province suffered immense damage, and once more Byzacene was swept by the Moors. However, in 546, John, the son of Pappus, was sent out as Magister Militum, and by his efforts the rebels were defeated and Africa recovered for the Eastern Empire.

At length the sorely tried Province was at peace, for though the borders were never safe, the interior was on the whole unmolested for another century. This long delayed and precarious peace came just in time to save Africa from utter ruin. For the century of barbarian rule and the twelve years of internecine strife had both diminished and impoverished the population[1]. At the Vandal Conquest, a large number of the inhabitants were slain or driven abroad. During the Vandal domination, the emigration still went on. At the end of Hunneric's reign, a terrible famine and plague slew thousands of all ranks. The days of Hilderic and Gelimer were days of disorder and civil strife, and in the twelve years that followed the reconquest, according to Procopius, not less than five millions perished[2]. Mr Hodgkin thus sums the matter up nearly in the words of the great Greek historian: "But from decade to decade, the fine country, which had once owned the sway of the Vandals, sank deeper into ruin. Many of the provincials fled into Sicily and the other islands of the Mediterranean. The traveller in passing through these regions, which had once been most thickly peopled, now seldom met a

[1] Procopius, *De Bello Vand.*, ii. 28.
[2] Procopius, *Anecdota*, xviii.

single wayfarer. Languishing under barbarian inroads, Imperial misgovernment and iniquitous taxation, the country was ripening fast for the time, when even Saracen invasion should seem a relief from yet more intolerable evils[1]."

Although Africa had already received its death-blow, it must not be supposed that its end came yet. It had sustained irreparable injuries and it was subject to a steady drain upon its strength, but despite all the Province for more than a century seemed to recover its old glories and to be almost as prosperous as it had been before the Vandals. Under the great Justinian the work of reorganization went on apace.

The whole civil and military administration of the Province was set in order and brought into touch with the necessities of the time. All Africa was divided into seven provinces, Carthage, Byzacene, Tripoli and Tingi[2] under Consulars, and Numidia, Mauritania and Sardinia under Praesides. Over all was set the Praetorian Praefect, who from his capital of Carthage exercised a general control. The army was stationed along the frontier in four divisions, each under its own Dux, in Tripoli, Byzacene, Numidia and Mauritania Caesariensis, and strict orders were issued to push the frontier back to what it had been before the invasion of the Vandals[3].

This was never done, and the mountainous region

[1] *Italy and Her Invaders*, iv. 46.

[2] Probably Tingi was a part of Africa only by geographical accident. The mountains of Atlas shut it off from Carthage, and it was really governed from Spain.

[3] *Cod. Justinian*, i. 27, 1–2.

between Sitifiensis and Gades was henceforth left to the barbarian rule. In Caesariensis only the town of Caesarea owned the Imperial sway and its communications with Carthage had to be carried on by sea; outside its walls an independent Berber chief, Mastigas, defied the power of Solomon[1], and his successors were never reduced to submission. On the other hand the influence if not the arms of Rome made some progress in Tripoli. Certain Moorish tribes adopted Christianity and were content to live at peace with the Province; but their name "Pacati" betrays how rare it was for the Africans to find the Berbers well disposed towards them[2].

Though the whole of Africa was never reconquered, most of the best lands were recovered. Proconsularis, Byzacene, Numidia and parts of Tripoli and Sitifiensis once more belonged to the Roman Empire; but Tingitana and Caesariensis were cut off for ever from the rule of Carthage. Still what had been reconquered was held securely; its borders were comparatively safe and the new fortifications and the strong frontier forces kept the Province free from all but occasional marauding raids.

It had taken twelve years of hard work and continual war to set up the civil authority of the Empire, but long before the Province had settled down to enjoy the "Pax Romana," the Church had adjusted its own affairs. As soon as the Vandal power had fallen, its liberty of action had returned, and in spite of the wars and rumours of wars that beset all Africa, as long as

[1] Procop., *De Bell. Vand.*, ii. 20.

[2] Procop., *De Aedif.*, vi. 3.

Carthage was in the hands of the Imperial forces, the Catholic bishops could go on with their task of reorganization. For much needed attention in order to restore the old order of things, and new problems caused by the century of persecution were clamouring for solution. On the other hand the restoration of Catholicism was less sudden than the restoration of Imperialism. Although the Church could not recover its property until Carthage and the Vandals had fallen, its lot had been considerably alleviated for some years before the arrival of Belisarius, and it may therefore be supposed that by 534 its organization, in all its essential branches, was fairly efficient[1].

On the death of Boniface, bishop of Carthage, Reparatus was elected, perhaps in 535[2]. The new Primate at once set about the settlement of the two great questions, to which the events of the last hundred years had given rise. The proscription of Catholicism had caused many Africans to embrace Arianism and had driven others to monasteries and convents to escape the wrath of the Vandals. Many of those who had joined the heretics now wished to return to the ranks of the orthodox, and some of the Arian clergy desired permission to retain their cures on renouncing their errors. The religious communities had during the days of persecution been allowed to conduct their own affairs unchecked by any episcopal supervision, and they now resisted the claims of their diocesans to exert the same authority over them as they had over the other Catholics within their dioceses. It was most important to set these problems

[1] Cf. Councils of Junca, Sufes and Carthage in Chap. VI.

[2] Victor Tunn. s.a. 535.

at rest. The ecclesiastical peace of Africa could never be restored until some rule for the reception of Arian penitents had been established, and until the relations of the episcopate to the monasteries were finally arranged a constant source of friction must continue to exist.

In order, therefore, to find a solution of the present difficulties, Reparatus summoned a great council of bishops to meet in the Basilica of Faustus in his cathedral city[1]. Two hundred and seventeen prelates assembled and decided to submit the question of the restoration of the Arians to Pope John II. A letter was drawn up and despatched asking guidance in this matter. Was, for example, every Arian to be excluded as long as he lived from ordination to the sacred offices? Were the heretical clergy, even if sincerely convinced of their errors, to be expelled from their cures? A much-needed warning was at the same time sent to the Roman Church against indiscriminate charity to fugitives from Africa, among whom were many of the provincial clergy who preferred to live on the charity of the Romans instead of facing the hard work necessary to be done in Africa. It would be far better for both Italy and Africa if only those travellers who could shew letters of recommendation from their bishop were received as sufferers for the orthodox faith and that all others should be treated as heretics.

This letter deserves the highest praise. It proves that the Church of Carthage had learnt much in its time of trial. Too often had the African Christians in their fanaticism done serious, if unintentional harm.

[1] Morcelli, *Africa Christiana*, s.a. 535; Hefele, iv. § 245.

But here we see the unexpectedly victorious behaving with almost exaggerated kindliness towards their defeated foe. Carthage had fallen in 533 and Belisarius was able safely to leave Africa in the following year. But it was not till 535 that the Catholics took in hand the question of the converted Arian clergy. For nearly two years the latter must have been allowed to enjoy their usurped positions and revenues, and no undue haste can be laid to the charge of the Church in dealing with them. When the Council was called the utmost charity was shewn. With a kindly confidence in the reality of their conversions, worthy of Cyprian or Augustine, an attempt was made to receive the heretics into the true fold on as easy terms as was compatible with right. In a spirit of the most Christian forgiveness, and with perhaps as much political wisdom, the Pope is asked to countenance the continuance wherever possible of the Arian clergy in their posts.

When the envoy reached Rome John II. was dead[1]; but his successor Agapetus I. answered the letter of the Council. No converted Arian might aspire to any ecclesiastical office, even if he had been "spotted with that plague" merely as a child; and he could not allow heretical priests after reconciliation to the Church to still hold their sacerdotal office. If, however, the bishops wished to support these dispossessed converts from the funds of the Church the Pope made no objection. With regard to the warning against ecclesiastical travellers from Africa, he would take care

[1] 27 May, 535.

that the words of the Council were respected. Ten years before the claim of the bishops to exercise control over the monasteries within their dioceses had caused some difficulty, and the Council held at Carthage in 525 had decided in favour of the independence of religious houses. Once more now the question was raised. Felician, the successor of the saintly Fulgentius in the see of Ruspe, desired to have a definition of his rights over the monastery founded by his predecessor, who though a bishop, had never ceased to be a monk. Bishop Felix of Zactera in Numidia quoted the decision of 525, and said that it still held good. The local diocesan was not entitled to interfere or have his cathedral within the walls of a monastery. He must not ordain any monk without his superior's consent, but if an abbat asked him to lay hands on one of his monks, or to consecrate the chapel of a monastery, he must not refuse him. Moreover, the monastic priests were to be fully recognized, and their names must be read out of the diptychs by the bishop at divine service in the list of clergy ordained by him. The diocesan too had no voice in the election of abbats. In the first instance they were to be chosen by the votes of all the community, but if there was a dispute, an appeal was to be made, not to the local bishop, but to other abbats, and from them to the primate of the Province. Whether this was the final decision of the Council or only the private opinion of Felix is not known; but in all probability, as the Church of Africa felt the greatest veneration for personal sanctity, the religious communities were allowed complete freedom from episcopal authority.

The only other business that the Council[1] is recorded to have undertaken was the despatch of an embassy to Justinian, claiming the restoration of all rights and property taken from the Church by the Vandals. Their petition met with a prompt response; the emperor ordered that all who could prove that the lands of themselves or their ancestors to the third generation had been taken from them by the invaders should receive them back, and on August 1, 535, issued a special edict to settle the position of the Church. All the property of the Catholics seized by the Arians was to be restored. No Arian, Donatist, or other heretic was to celebrate the sacraments, or choose and ordain bishops and clergy, and none but the orthodox were to be employed by the State. Jews were forbidden to have Christian slaves, to circumcise a catechumen, or to set up synagogues. The Church of Carthage was confirmed in its metropolitan rank and was allowed the right of sanctuary for all save ravishers, murderers, or the enemies of Christianity, and everything dedicated to God was declared to be sacrosanct[2]. This edict contained little that was new and restored what was practically the state of things before the Vandal Invasion. As before, the Arians and Donatists were oppressed. The Catholics recovered their former property, and the bishop of Carthage was once more recognized as the Primate of the African Church.

As Byzacene had suffered most severely from the ravages of the Moors, it was necessary for the primate Datius to make use of the brief respite

[1] Hefele, iv. § 248.

[2] Justinian, Nov. 36, 37; Morcelli, *Africa Christiana*, s.a. 535.

afforded by the success of Solomon in his second term of office to reorganize the provincial Church. In 541, and possibly in 540, councils were held for the restoration of discipline. A letter was sent to Justinian asking him to support the Church, to which a favourable response was given, followed probably by a further interchange of correspondence. Thus, in 542, Datius wrote another letter, declaring that his efforts were directed to the enforcement of the ancient ecclesiastical discipline alone, and that he was not trying to increase its stringency[1]. The extremely meagre records do not narrate the measures of the primate of Byzacene or their success; but there cannot be any doubt that in the terrible confusion that was so soon to overtake this district the Church suffered very greatly, not only by disorganization and want of discipline, but by an actual loss of members.

The only mention by contemporary writers of the attitude of the clergy towards the tyrants who ruled Africa between 543 and 546, relates an unfortunate incident concerning Reparatus, the bishop of Carthage. The Primate hastened to meet Gontharis, on his capturing the city, in order to make the peace of the Church with him. The despot used the presence of the bishop to induce Areobindus, the Magister Militum, to come to the palace under pledge of safety, and then had him treacherously slain[2]. To accuse Reparatus of any conscious part in the murder is absurd, and he had to pay, later on, the full price for his indiscretion in having any dealings at all with a barbarous usurper.

Nothing else is known of the condition of the

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 540—2. [2] Procop., *De Bell. Vand.*, II. 28.

Church during this terrible time of civil strife. It was not directly endangered and only suffered with the rest of the Province; but if Procopius does not exaggerate, both Africa and the Church had now to submit to a loss of numbers which nothing could repair. A great crisis was overhanging the whole of Christendom, and the action of the African Christians seems to shew that, though for a time they were too busy with their own affairs to attend to the troubles of other communions, yet when they were at peace neither their organization nor their orthodoxy had been hurt by the twelve years of civil confusion. The famous dispute about the Three Chapters began in 543; the Church of Carthage could pay little attention until 549, but when it did the Council of Chalcedon had no more fervent champion.

Justinian, in his old age, had trespassed on the domains of theology, and tried to amend the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (452), by anathematizing three bishops, whom that assembly had declared orthodox. Theoretically the emperor was perhaps right, but it was dangerous to admit that there could be no finality in theological disputes. Moreover, the clergy of the West feared that any attack on the provisions of the Council was really aimed at the creed of the Council itself, and prepared to resist with might and main the decree of the emperor.

Vigilius, the pope, led the opposition to the Imperial decrees, and from the first had the sympathy of the Church of Carthage. Legates from Africa, in 544, strengthened his hand, and two of their number, Facundus, bishop of Hermiana, and Ferrandus, a deacon

of Carthage, distinguished themselves as authors of attacks upon Justinian[1]. Five years later, when the struggle was growing more acute all over the West, a council, held at Carthage, urged the Church to resist the unjustifiable demands of the secular power and argued that the whole authority of the Council of Chalcedon was impugned, from a pedantic desire to remedy one-third of its decrees[2]. In 550, another Council of Carthage excommunicated Vigilius for yielding to the Imperial commands.

In 551 the quarrel came to a head, and the pope, for opposing Justinian, was banished to Chalcedon. It is interesting to note that the august exile was accompanied in his exile by two African bishops, Verecundus of Junca and Primasius of Adrumetum. Meanwhile the primates of Proconsularis and Numidia, Reparatus and Firmus, had been summoned to Constantinople to represent Africa. At the Fifth General Council both worthily maintained the validity of the Three Chapters. but afterwards Firmus was won over by the presents of the emperor and was allowed to return home, only to fall ill and die before he reached Africa. Reparatus steadily resisted the Imperial arguments and bribes, and it was determined to send him too into exile. On an accusation, invented for the occasion, that he was responsible for the murder of Areobindus six years before, he was banished to the island of Euchaïta, where he died on the 7th of January, 563.

In his place, Primasius, his deacon apocrisiarius, who must be distinguished from his namesake, the bishop of Adrumetum, was, in reward for his compli-

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 544. [2] *Ibid.* s.a. 549.

ancy, sent to Carthage by the emperor, as bishop. This appointment was as uncanonical as it was unjust, and was for a time repudiated by the other African bishops. However, after some disturbances and bloodshed, in 554, the force of circumstances caused the African clergy to reconsider their position, and a council assembled at Carthage consented to receive Primasius as their primate, and to repeal the former decisions against Vigilius.

For the next twelve years Africa was torn by this senseless schism. For a time it seemed as though Justinian would soon be victorious; the clergy of the Proconsular Province had accepted his views in 554, and their brethren of Numidia followed their example in the following year. However, Byzacene was not yet convinced, and the diatribes of Facundus of Hermiana raised a sturdy spirit of resistance. To overcome this Justinian appointed, in 555, Primasius of Adrumetum primate of the Province in succession to Boethius, who had just died. Nothing could be more unpopular amongst clergy and laity alike than this choice. Not only was it an usurpation of the selection of the Primate, but Primasius had secured his appointment by unworthy means. First he had supported Vigilius and had even been exiled to the monastery of Acaetmetae[1], but now he bought his elevation by his apostasy. His conduct as primate justified the worst fears of his old friends. He persecuted the opinion which he formerly upheld and plundered those whom he oppressed. In the end he

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 553.

was found guilty of extortion, and made to disgorge his ill-gotten gains and died a miserable death.

Meanwhile, the other Primasius, bishop of Carthage, had been doing his best to win over all Africa to the opinions of the emperor. He exiled Victor of Tunno and Theodore of Cabarsussum, and, according to the former, oppressed other opponents with scourges, imprisonments and exile. After eight years of confinement these two champions of the Three Chapters were summoned with bishops Musicus, Brumasius, Donatus, and Chrysonius to Constantinople, to defend their views before the emperor. Theodore died on the same day as Justinian in the year 565.

With the death of the author of the famous edicts the meaningless dispute of the Three Chapters came to a fitting end. His successor, Justinus, never clearly defined his views on the subject, and the opponents of Justinian claimed that the victory lay with them. As a matter of fact both sides had some cause to rejoice. The emperor was able to point to the delegates from Africa, who had signed the resolutions of the Fifth Œcumenical Synod at Constantinople, in May 553; and the African supporters of the Chapters could urge that they had prevented the Church of Spain from accepting the Imperial edicts. But by 566 the whole quarrel had sunk to its proper proportions, and no breach in communion was caused, because Rome had, and Africa and Spain had not, condemned the Three Chapters[1].

It is by no means clear that this uninteresting

[1] For the whole of the quarrel see Victor of Tunno, s.a. 550–566; Hefele, IV. §§ 260, 262 B, 267, 275, 277.

quarrel had any permanent effect upon the destinies of the Church in Africa. Victor of Tunno's evidence about the persecutions of Primasius must be received with a good deal of caution. He was himself a sufferer, and undoubtedly, in one instance, party passion has so overridden his judgment that he is able to praise a certain Abbat Felix, of Gillitan, because he was an opponent of Justinian, although he had been banished to Sinope for his scandalous conduct, which had ruined his monastery[1]. Moreover this period seems to have been one of great literary activity in Africa; Primasius of Adrumetum, Junillus of Utica, Victor of Matera, Eugipius, abbat of the monastery of Lucullanae, and Verecundus of Junca, all were noted authors. Most of the subjects they chose were theological, but Victor of Matera was a critic as well as a divine[2]. Foreigners, as we are informed, began once more to look to Africa as a seat of learning; Cassiodorus, a Spanish abbat sent to the superior of a monastery in Tripoli for commentaries on the Epistles of St Paul, collected from St Augustine's works, by Paul[3], and later on we find that the monks of Africa were held in such estimation, that they were even summoned to preside over monasteries at Rome. Thus Quoddeusvult was made abbat of the Greater Monastery of the Blessed Apostle Peter[4], and Adrian was sent to England, with Theodore of Tarsus[5]. This superiority was also maintained on doctrinal points; in no part of the West were the clergy and people so orthodox as in Africa.

[1] Hefele, iv. § 260; Victor Tunn., s.a. 553; Morcelli, s.a. 557.

[2] Morcelli, s.a. 556.

[3] *Ibid.* s.a. 561.

[4] *Ibid.* s.a. 583.

[5] Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, iv. 1.

In the thirty years that followed the fall of the Vandal power the African Church shewed no signs within itself of approaching dissolution. In fact it seemed to have recovered even more than it had lost. Its organization enabled it to act at once with the utmost decision. It had the courage of its opinions. It dared to brave the anger of the emperor, and if it yielded at last, it might have fairly pleaded that there was nothing to be gained compared with the losses it must sustain by holding out. A too rigid opposition to pedantry even though in the right may itself become pedantic in the end. Such persecutions as there were, grievous as they may have been to the sufferers, in no way affected the vitality of the Church. At the end of the reign of Justinian, the African Christians could with justice look forward to a long and useful existence for the orthodox and well-organized body of which they were members. It is to secular, not religious matters that the historian must turn to discover the reason of the extinction of the African Church.

At this period two Imperial edicts were published of vital importance alike to the social as to the political welfare of the Province. The first affected the numbers of the population, and especially of the agricultural population. If Rome wished to retain her hold upon Africa, it was all-important to maintain sufficient people in the country districts to keep out the encroaching Moors. The Vandal occupation, the terrible pestilence of the time of Hunneric, the years of disorder after the reconquest had, as has been said, reduced the population to an alarming extent, and

now a law of Justinian bid fair to extinguish it altogether. By this edict the children of a freewoman and a man bound to the soil were no longer to be serfs themselves, but, taking their condition from their mothers, were free to go where they pleased[1]. The result was most prejudicial to agriculture, and Theodorus, the new prefect of Africa, was continually warned of the impossibility of keeping any population on the land. Farms were falling vacant in every direction, and it was inevitable that all who could would flock to the gay life of the towns rather than stay in the country to glean such miserable existence as the tax-gatherer left them. Justinus saw the truth of this, and in 568 he altered the law in the same way as its author had himself changed it in the case of Illyria[1]. The children of an alliance between a freewoman and slave should be personally free, but should be forbidden to leave their native villages to seek work elsewhere. Another edict of Justinus was of a much more questionable character. By a law published on September 14, 566, marriages were made dissoluble by mutual consent. When the fearfully lax state of the morals of the Province is considered, it seems that this edict must have had a most serious effect upon the sanctity of the marriage vow. Yet strangely enough there is no mention of any episcopal protests against the new law[2].

It is, however, possible that a protest was made and that all mention of it has been lost. The history of the African province for the last two centuries before the Saracen conquest has to be compiled from records

[1] Justinian, Cod. xi. tit. 47, l. 24; in Morcelli, s.a. 567.

[2] Cod. de fil. liberarum; in Morcelli, s.a. 568.

of the scantiest description. The tide of Mohammedan invasion swept away nearly all that the Moorish raids had left and the greater part of the history of the decline of the Roman power is irrevocably lost. Still the little that remains makes it clear that year by year the boundaries of the Province continued to shrink. More and more of Africa lapsed into barbarism, and when civilization drew back the Church could no longer retain its foothold.

For a time, indeed, the Roman prefects were able to keep back the Moors, but the weakness of the legions forced them to stoop to the payment of tribute. An annual sum had to be given to Cutzinas, the chief of a great Berber confederation, and as long as this blackmail was paid the province enjoyed peace. But in 563, with the most foolish treachery, the chief was murdered as he came for his subsidy, and at once his followers rose in revenge. All Africa was devastated, and Marcian, the emperor's nephew, had to be hastily sent to save the wretched Province[2]. For a time he secured peace, but from 568 to 570 the Moors were again able to ravage unchecked. In 568, they slew the Prefect Theodore, in 569, Theoctistes, the Magister Militum, and in 570 his successor Amabilis[3]. Moreover, an independent kingdom, under Gasmulas, flourished to the west of the Roman dominions.

Africa was at this time rescued from decay by the arrival of a capable general and the publication of a wise law. Gennadius, the new Magister Militum, slew

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 566.

[2] Theophanes, s.a. 555.

[3] John Biclar. *Chron.*, s.a. 3, 4, 5; Justin II.

Gasmulas in 578, and drove the Moors back to their old territories[1]; while at the same time the gulf between civilization and barbarism was partly bridged over by an Imperial edict. Justinus had decreed, as has already been said, that the children of a freewoman, by a servile husband, should be free in condition but bound to their native villages, and now bishop Publianus of Carthage, induced Tiberius II. to see that it was carried out. In consequence, there grew up within the provincial borders a large population, semi-Berber in blood, who formed a link between the civilized Roman of the towns and the wild barbarians of the hills. Though this new element was not calculated to permanently strengthen the Province, it staved off for a time the pressure of invasion, and for the next 14 years Africa seems to have been at peace[2].

Of course all this anarchy, it has been our painful task to relate, wrought harm to the Church. The few records that are left speak of ruined monasteries and impoverished monks. Religious communities were broken up, the pursuit of learning hindered, and a life of peaceful devotion made an impossibility. In such circumstances, the exodus from Africa, which had begun under the Vandals, still went on. Nunctus, with his whole community, crossed to Spain, and won the favour of even the Arian king, Leovigild, by his good works, and was soon followed there by Donatus, with his seventy monks[3].

Meanwhile, the authority of the Church steadily

[1] *Ibid.*, s.a. 2; Tiberius II. [2] Morcelli, s.a. 568.
[3] Morcelli, s.a. 567, 569.

increased, while the number of its members as steadily declined. The Primate of Byzacene obtained the sole right to try criminous clerks, and was promised that all his petitions should be considered by the emperor himself. Moreover, no clerk was to sail for Constantinople without the permission of the Primate of his province[1]. Too little is known of the ecclesiastical history of this time to invest these privileges with much meaning, though it may be conjectured that they point to some internal troubles, which the Primate desired to allay by his own methods. In the same way it is only possible to record the following events; the circumstances which gave them life have been completely forgotten.

About 566, Primasius, of Carthage, died and was succeeded by Publianus. This prelate was followed by Dominicus, whose consecration Morcelli puts in 584, but on purely conjectural grounds. In 570, a Council was held at Suffetula, of which we know nothing, save that it dealt with questions of discipline[2].

Once again for a few years it is possible to form some idea of the condition of the African Church. The light that is now thrown on the great Province is not, it is true, very bright, and it but half illumines much that is most interesting. Moreover, from its very nature it is but a half light liable to distort while it illuminates. Still it is a light, and in the utter darkness that threatens to engulf the Church of Carthage any illumination, however imperfect, is of the utmost value. The correspondence of the great Pope Gregory I. contains many letters on the ecclesiastical

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 568.

[2] *Dict. Christian Antiquities*, Art. 'African Councils.'

affairs of Africa, which are the greatest help in estimating the state of the Province. They must, however, be read with caution and with due remembrance of the essential conditions of a Papal correspondence.

It is only fair to keep in mind the very one-sided nature of any communications passing between the Pope and any one of the semi-independent communions under his charge. In the ordinary course of events, as long indeed as affairs were proceeding with customary smoothness, the letters between the Roman and the other Churches would be confined to the courtesies and formalities of everyday life. Only when there was anything that called for reproof, when matters needed the strong hand of correction and authority, would the Pope be called to interfere. It is then only natural that nearly all Gregory's correspondence with Africa should be of the nature of reproofs. All commonplace virtue, all regular daily self-sacrifice and holiness would call forth no commendation from the supreme Pontiff. For it was not his business to commend that which he had the right to expect to be, and in all probability was, the regular rule of existence of the African Church. To reprove when there was need, to leave praises and reward to his Master, was the duty of the Pope. To infer that the state of African Christianity was wholly bad, because nearly all Gregory's letters deal with grave dangers and abuses, would be as unreasonable, as it would be to judge of the state of a Church by a few disciplinary enactments. It is far more important to notice the confidence with which the distant Pope can appeal to the organization of the African Church to correct those abuses which demanded his care.

There was, indeed, great need of external authority to criticize the African Church at this time. Not only was there a dangerous outburst of Donatism, but the morality of the episcopate and clergy left much to be desired. To the mind of the great ecclesiastical statesman the cause of these evils was a dangerous lack of discipline, and Gregory attempted to reform the internal organization of the Church by making the Papal authority to be more directly felt.

The principal crimes attributed to the African Church were simony and avarice. Mere boys were admitted to the lower ranks of the clergy, and bribes were offered to procure the ordination of men of loose morals. The peculiar diocesan system of Africa had been always liable to abuse, and once more complaints were heard of the encroachments of a bishop upon the see of another. In Numidia, Valentio had seized certain parishes belonging to Crisconius, and had refused to restore them for fifteen years[1].

In all this Gregory saw the need of a stricter discipline. He was especially suspicious of the traditional mode by which bishops reached the Provincial Primacy. It seemed to his practical mind absurd to entrust the exacting and responsible duties of an archbishop to whichever prelate happened to have been consecrated for the greatest length of time. Such a prelate would almost certainly be advanced in years; he might often hold an unimportant or inaccessible see; and mere seniority was no guarantee of his moral or intellectual fitness. Gennadius, the Praetorian Prefect, was therefore asked to see that the Primate of Numidia should

[1] Gregory I., Ep. VIII. 28.

be selected solely according to the requirements of the office. An archbishop ought to be distinguished for personal holiness and intellectual force, and his diocese ought to be in a place convenient for resisting the Donatists. Practical as this advice was, it found small favour in the eyes of the Numidian bishops; their conservative instincts rebelled against an alteration of an immemorial custom, and they at once despatched a vigorous protest to Gregory. The Pope yielded to this unanimous expression of opinion on the part of the local Church. In a letter addressed to all the bishops of the Province he withdrew his opposition to all well-established customs, permitting the appointment of the Primates and all other matters to continue as before, as long as it was clearly understood that no Donatist should benefit through the blind working of an illogical principle[1].

Foiled in his attempt to reorganize the African Church on a more satisfactory basis, Gregory did his best to keep it in order by the despatch of confidential agents and the cooperation of the secular officers. In Gennadius, the Praetorian Prefect, and Innocent, his successor, the Pope found invaluable assistants. To the former he expressed his desires concerning the appointment of primates, and commended Hilarus, one of his deputies[2]; he was moreover invited to help the Council of Numidia to suppress heresy[3], and took some part in the accusation of Bishop Paullus[4]. Innocent had been the friend of Gregory before he went to Carthage and joined with the bishop of that city in

[1] Ep. I. 74, 77.
[2] Ep. I. 74.
[3] Ep. IV. 7.
[4] Ep. VI. 63.

calling the attention of the Pope to the condition of the Sardinians[1].

More important, however, than these Roman officials were the two ecclesiastics, who acted almost as though they were the Papal legates in Africa. Hilarus was sent from Italy to be the overseer of the estates or patrimony of the Church, and to regulate the distribution of alms to the poor[2]. Columbus was a bishop of Numidia, who seems to have derived his importance rather from Gregory's confidence and esteem than from holding any particular official position; it may well be that the Pope had this prelate in his mind when he attempted to change the method of appointing to the Primacy. These two men were in truth the pillars of the influence of Rome in Africa. Again and again does Gregory refer difficult questions to their decision. If a bishop is accused of heinous crime, if there is a suspicion of heresy, if anyone is charged with simony, these men are bidden call a council and bring the matter to an end. Columbus especially acted as the papal representative, and he was associated with Victor, Primate of Numidia, in the cases of Bishop Paullus, of Bishop Valentio and of Paullinus, bishop of Tigisis. He was asked, too, to take the initiative in settling the dispute between Bishop Victor and his deacon Donadeus, and he was recommended to Adeodatus, another Primate of Numidia, as an adviser whose words should carry as much weight as those of the Pope himself[3].

Unfortunately there were grave objections to this method of exercising control. Carthage had always

[1] Ep. x. 37—8. [2] Ep. i. 75—6.

[3] Ep. iv. 34—5; viii. 28; xii. 28—9; xii. 8; iii. 49.

been jealous of the interference of Rome, and in the time of Aurelius the twentieth synod of Carthage had declared that the Pope had no jurisdiction over the African Church[1]. Since then circumstances had weakened its independence. The long years of bondage under the Vandals had both disorganized the Church in Africa, and had prevented it from finding remedies for the needs of the time. The help of Rome was therefore gladly accepted without any constitutional questions being raised. Leo the Great addressed a letter of reproof to the bishops of Mauritania. Felix, in 487 or 488, assembled a synod at the Lateran about the return of Catholics, guilty of having lapsed into Arianism, at which hardly a tenth of those present had come from Africa. The synod of Carthage, in 535, appealed to John II. upon the same point. But now circumstances were altered and the African episcopate seemed inclined to resist outside interference.

Gregory's criticism of the appointment of primates had already caused irritation, casting, as it did, a slur upon the zeal and organization of the African episcopate, and this irritation was still further increased by the means adopted by the Pope to ensure good government. It cannot, for instance, have been pleasant for Adeodatus to be advised to follow the counsel of Columbus; and no doubt the other bishops looked askance at the man who was continually called upon to hear the complaints against his colleagues[2].

Gregory's own views on the matter are clear enough. As the successor of St Peter, he thought himself

[1] Hefele, § 120—2—5, vol. II. p. 462, etc.

[2] Gregory I., Ep. VII. 2.

entitled to interfere whenever he saw the necessity, and to hear the appeals of all who had reasonable grounds for applying to him. For a time these claims bred some ill-feeling with Dominicus of Carthage; but peace was soon restored, and the Pope won his point. Rome was, he asserted, the mother-church of Africa, and was therefore entitled to the utmost respect[1]. Columbus he tried to comfort for his unpopularity by urging the duty of a bishop to support the Papal authority, and by claiming that no man, however exalted, can escape the strictures of Rome if he breaks the laws of God and His Church[2].

To maintain a position like this, and to enforce the right of intervention, required a man of exceptional strength. But Gregory was exceptionally strong, and he was able not only to exercise, but even to increase the power of the Papal See. He appears to have encouraged and welcomed the frequent appeals made to Rome, and bade Gennadius to take care that any bishops who were dissatisfied with the Numidian Synod of 591 should be allowed to proceed freely to Rome[3], and in half-a-dozen other cases matters were referred to Gregory's decision. The deacons Vincentius and Felicissimus accuse Bishop Argentius of Lamiga, of Donatism and simony[4]; the clergy of Pudentia are alarmed in the like tendencies in Bishop Maximianus[5]; the priest Adeodatus, and the deacon Donadeus, declare themselves wrongly deprived of their offices[6]; all alike carry their complaints to Gregory, who remits their

[1] Ep. VIII. 33.
[2] Ep. VII. 2; IX. 58—9.
[3] Ep. I. 74.
[4] Ep. I. 84.
[5] Ep. II. 48.
[6] Ep. IV. 13; XII. 8.

causes to his agents, Columbus or Hilarus, for investigation and redress.

The most interesting of all these appeals is that of the Abbat Cumquodeus, who reported a complete collapse of monastic discipline. All over Africa monks were leaving their cells and wandering through the country, regardless of their vows and rules. As the bishops, who had always regarded the monasteries with jealousy, rather aided than checked this laxity, much harm was done to religion and good order. In any country such a state of affairs must have caused grave scandal; but through the peculiarities of the national character it was especially dangerous in Africa. From the first individuals were honoured there for their asceticism and personal piety at the expense of the authority of the entire Church, and consequently ambition instead of a true vocation had led many to assume the monastic vows. Some through an evanescent disgust with the things of this world had forsworn for ever not only its pleasures but its duties; others through a desire for mere temporal advantages had entered the cloister; and it was these who now seized the opportunity to desert their monasteries and wander about the Province. Too frequently the monastic garb was assumed as a cloak for secret vice, and the liberty of the saints claimed as an excuse for a licentious life. The danger was at once appreciated by Gregory, and he urged Dominicus of Carthage to save such an important part of the Church's system from the discredit which had fallen upon it[1].

[1] Ep. VII. 35.

The circumstances of the time made it most necessary to check any outburst of popular fanaticism. In the western and less civilized districts of Africa Donatism had reappeared. Nothing seems to have been heard of it from the invasion of the Vandals till the days of Gregory, and there is some difficulty in explaining its sudden activity after a slumber of a hundred and seventy years. Evidently the measures of St Augustine had not done more than break the power of the schism in Proconsularis and Byzacene, for the storm of the Vandal invasion had burst on the Province before he could drive it out from all Africa. It has been shewn that there is some reason to suppose that Donatism appealed more to the Libyan than the Roman population, and it is probable that when the schismatics of the plains were coerced or induced to return to the Catholic fold, the less civilized members of the sect had retreated to the inaccessible mountain ranges of Numidia and Mauritania. Here, out of reach of either the Arian invaders or the restored Catholics, they had lingered for nearly two hundred years, maintaining their own orders, and professing their peculiar tenets. In their increased strength at the close of the sixth century may perhaps be seen a sign of the growing feebleness of the Roman hold upon the interior of the Province. As the Imperial influence diminished, that of the Moors increased, until at length the form of faith which appealed most to the Libyan mind began to undermine the power of the Catholic Church.

For, as far as can be judged from the letters[1] of

[1] The letters of Gregory dealing with Donatism are: I. 74, 77, 84; II. 48, 37; IV. 7, 34—5; V. 5; VI. 37, 63—5; VII. 2.

Gregory, the impulse towards Donatism came rather from the laity than the clergy. The schism in the beginning had arisen on a question of the ordination of bishops; now it is revived by the forcing or bribing of the Numidian and Mauritanian prelates to ordain clergy, acceptable to the people. The movement was a popular one and the ecclesiastical authorities were unable or unwilling to resist it. As it gathered strength, it increased in violence, and in spite of their proscription by the laws of both Church and State, the Donatists steadily drove out the Catholics. Bishops were bribed to consecrate schismatics; orthodox clergy were expelled from their cures; rebaptism became a common practice, and even men, who had taken the vows of religion, allowed their sons, their slaves and dependents to be contaminated by a repetition of this sacrament. Argentius, bishop of Lamiga[1] and Maximianus of Pudentia[2], were accused of accepting bribes in favour of the Donatist clergy. Bishop Paullus[3] was said to be slack in opposing the schismatics, and even the secular governors Gennadius and Pantaleon[4] were suspected of feeling no great desire to see them crushed out.

In truth, Numidia and Mauritania seemed to be slipping from the grasp of the Catholics. Far away from Carthage and with a Libyan population, there was real fear that they would follow their own course, and perhaps desert the doctrines as they had the practice of the main body of the Church. The brighter services of the Donatists[5] and their excessive veneration for

[1] Ep. I. 84. [2] Ep. II. 48. [3] Ep. VI. 63—5; VII. 2.
[4] Ep. IV. 34—5. [5] Ep. I. 119.

personal piety powerfully attracted the half-civilised mountaineers of the borders. Moreover, there was little to check them, and their changed attitude towards the Catholics made them the more dangerous foes. In the fourth and fifth centuries the Donatists had set up a distinct organization, and Donatist and Catholic bishops existed side by side in the same city. In the sixth century the Donatists remained in the Church, and tried to mould the existing machinery to their own pattern. Where once they would have formed a separate body, they were now content to be a party, and unfortunately they were the party which possessed the popular support.

Gregory hardly knew where to look for help. The danger was, it is true, confined to the west, but the very freedom of Proconsularis and Byzacene from contamination had perils of its own. Dominicus, of Carthage, was inclined to too vigorous measures. At a synod, held in 594[1], the council of Proconsularis declared that all who were lukewarm in resisting the schism must lose their goods and their offices, and even included bishops in their decree. Gregory was alarmed at this severity, and felt that it was unjust and impolitic. The other Primates would think a slur was cast on their zeal and might be inclined to resent the attitude of Proconsularis, and thus the decree might do more to perpetuate than to abate the schism.

But, if the eastern prelates were too eager, the western were too slack. The Council of Numidia was not to be trusted. Bitter quarrels divided it, and its decisions on many points were contrary to the canons

[1] Ep. v. 5.

of the Church and the traditions of the Fathers[1]. It was, moreover, with the best intentions hard to get to the truth of the business. If Paullus was accused of Donatism, he replied it was because of his zeal for the Church. If Gennadius accused Paullus, it was said that he did it to shield himself. On all sides were recriminations, and it was clear that the Church was full of internal divisions. In this crisis Gregory could rely on Columbus alone, and it was to him that he always turned. He urged him again and again to make vigorous enquiries, and he bade him resist the evil with all his might, while it was yet small and could be comparatively easily put down.

It is impossible to estimate how far the efforts of Gregory and Columbus met with success. It is most unlikely that they really crushed the Donatists, but they perhaps checked them for the time. The Pope's later letters contain no reference to them at all, and no more is heard of them in Africa; but when more than a century later the Saracens drove the Christians of the Province to seek refuge in Europe, Gregory II. had to warn the bishops of Germany against African fugitives, tainted with Donatism and Manichaeism[2]. It is probable then that the schismatics still lingered on in their mountain homes, and while Proconsularis and Byzacene, and even the more fertile parts of Numidia, were altogether Catholic, in the frontier districts Donatism only disappeared with African Christianity itself.

From other ecclesiastical troubles Africa seems to have been almost free. Morcelli, indeed, supposes that the Arians, expelled from Spain by the edicts of

[1] Gregory I., Ep. iv. 7. [2] Gregory II., Ep. 124.

Reccaredus, came to Africa[1]; but of this there is no evidence, and the difficulties of the land journey from Tingitana to Carthage would counteract the actual geographical nearness of the Province to Spain. On the other hand, Gregory's letter to John of Scyllace shews that Manichaeism still lurked in Africa[2], and a scandal connected with the Primate Crementius, of which no details are extant, threatened a schism in Byzacene[3]. Still, with the exception of Numidia and Mauritania, ecclesiastical Africa seems to have been in a flourishing condition in the days of Gregory the Great. The Church indeed, was even able to extend her boundaries; for Gennadius, when he conquered a Berber tribe, did his best to convert it as well. He also shewed his interest in the Church by trying to repopulate some of its lands, which had suffered through the raids of the Moors[4].

For, whatever might be the ecclesiastical condition of the Province, its political state was growing steadily worse. In 593, the Moors once more devastated all Proconsularis. They drove Gennadius into Carthage and forced him to promise all the gold of the city as a ransom. They celebrated their victory by a feast, thus giving the Romans their opportunity. As they lay, overcome with wine and sleep, the garrison opened the gates by night, sallied forth, and inflicted enormous loss upon the besieging force[5]. Though the Province was thus for a time secure from the Moors, it had now to meet with a more terrible and resistless foe.

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 589.
[2] Ep. II. 37.
[3] Epp. IX. 58—9; XII. 32.
[4] Ep. I. 75.
[5] Morcelli, s.a. 593.

In 599 and 600 the whole western world was visited by a fearful pestilence, and Africa had to bear its full share of the calamity[1]. Moreover, to the horrors of war and pestilence, the horrors of misgovernment were added. In many places the Roman officials, protected by unjust judges, were guilty of the greatest violence and in particular aroused the anger of Gregory by extorting the tribute twice from the heavily taxed people[2].

Dark though the condition of Africa was, it would be wrong to suppose that at this time it was worse off than the rest of the remains of the Roman Empire. All through the civilized world horrors had become the commonplaces of life. Misgovernment and barbarian invasions, wars, pestilence and famine united to make this epoch one of the most miserable in human history. To the eyes of contemporaries the Province of Africa appeared one of the most favoured districts of the earth, and, in truth, it really played no unimportant part in the seventh century.

In 600, the Emperor Maurice called upon Africa for help for Italy against the Lombards with a fleet[3]. In 609, Heraclius, the Prefect of the Province, rose against Phocas the usurper, and at the earnest request of the Senate seized the throne of Constantinople in his stead[4]. But the Persians were now attacking the Imperial city and had even advanced to within sight

[1] Gregory I., Ep. IX. 123; X. 63. [2] Ep. XI. 5.

[3] Morcelli, s.a. 600.

[4] Theophanes, s.a. 600—1; Nicephorus in Brev. init.; Zonares, *Ann.* XIV. 14.

of its walls. Heraclius looked round for a refuge, and none seemed to him so safe as the province over which he had ruled. Outwardly, at least, it appeared to flourish and its desert frontiers promised to protect it from all attack from the east. Heraclius therefore decided to remove his seat of government to Carthage and was only prevented from doing so by the force of circumstances. Twice he tried to go, and once he had even embarked his regalia; but the entreaties, and perhaps the threats of the people of Constantinople compelled him to abandon his scheme[1]. At this time in fact Africa, reduced as it was in size, exposed to barbarian raids, subject to terrible pestilences, was the safest part of the Roman Empire. In 619, it was the only province not overrun by barbarian hordes[2].

One more glimpse of the African Church is vouchsafed to us before its records close for ever. Already the list of the bishops of Carthage has failed. It is not likely that Dominicus long outlived Gregory, but the date of his death is unknown, and there is no mention of any other Primates until the rise of Monothelitism. The history of this heresy shews that, in 639, a certain Fortunatus was bishop of Carthage, and that he was succeeded by Victor, on 16th July, 646.

The attitude of Africa towards the Monothelites[3] proves that the Church maintained her organization, and could act with vigour until a very few years before

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 615, 617; Nicephorus Chron. Brev. s.a. 617: Chron. Paschale, s.a. 645.

[2] Morcelli, s.a. 619.

[3] For attitude of Africa towards Monothelitism, see Hefele, §§ 303—4; Theophanes, s.a. 621.

its end finally came. The celebrated Ecthesis of the Patriarch Sergius was published in 639, and despatched to all the Churches. From the very first Africa repudiated the heresy, for as the Prefect Gregory was shewing the Monothelite manifesto to Fortunatus of Carthage and the other bishops, Maximus, abbat of Chrysopolis, arrived and warned them against the doctrines therein enunciated. His efforts were successful, and none of the African prelates were convinced by the Ecthesis with one notable exception; Fortunatus himself accepted the new teaching and declared himself a Monothelite[1]. His influence prevented Proconsularis from taking any steps against the heresy; but in all the other provinces the Church formally repudiated the false doctrines. Columbus, Primate of Numidia, Stephen of Byzacene, and Reparatus of Mauritania called together their synods and condemned the Ecthesis and its supporters; and a common letter was drawn up and sent to Paul of Constantinople, expressing the detestation in which the African Churches held the heresy. It is interesting to notice that this letter was not sent direct, because "Africa had been brought into a certain suspicion at Constantinople by certain malevolent people," and that it expressed submission to the Papal See.

Stephen of Byzacene also wrote to the Emperor Constans II. in the name of "*cuncti Africae sacerdotes*" urging him on to stronger measures against the heretics, and a second letter to Paul of Constantinople set forth the surprise of the Churches that he had not yet

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 639.

annulled the Ecthesis, and declared the orthodoxy of Africa.

Meanwhile the heresiarch Pyrrhus visited Africa and tried to make converts there[1]. He was confronted by the Abbat Maximus and met with no success. A public disputation between the two champions was held before the Prefect Gregory, probably in the year 645. The Monothelites were completely defeated, and forced to confess their errors; conqueror and conquered went to Rome, where Pyrrhus made a public recantation, only to return in a few weeks to his errors[2].

Once more the provincial synods anathematized Monothelitism, with the exception of Proconsularis, where Fortunatus was still Primate. Even here the Church was orthodox, and Gulosus, bishop of Pupit, on his own responsibility summoned a convention of his sixty-seven colleagues to join the other provinces in their condemnation of heresy. However, the days of Fortunatus were numbered; on July 16, 646, he was deposed, and Victor was consecrated to the see of Carthage in his place[3]. The new Primate wrote to the emperor Theodore I. to vindicate his own orthodoxy and to urge the adoption of vigorous measures against the heretics. Whatever the cloud between Constantinople and Carthage was, it had not yet been dissipated; Victor gives it as his reason for not writing directly to the Patriarch and asks that his letter may be forwarded through the Papal *responsarii*.

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 642. [2] Morcelli, s.a. 645.
[3] Morcelli, s.a. 646.

So ends all that we know of the assault of Monothelitism upon Africa. It clearly was not successful, but whether it gained a foothold at all, whether any besides Fortunatus were deceived by it, how far the orthodox bishops were able to stamp it out, there is nothing to shew. But it is plain that the heart of African Christianity is still sound. The organization is still complete and can even bear an unusual strain. The convention under Gulosus was no doubt unconstitutional but very necessary, and the deposition of the Primate was an act requiring both courage and unanimity. As far as can now be seen, the career of Monothelitism in Africa betrayed no weakness in the armour of the Church.

With the consecration of Victor the ecclesiastical history of the Province practically closes. Two more facts can indeed be gleaned, but they are isolated and unimportant. At a council against the Monothelites held at the Lateran in 648, one African bishop, Victorianus of Uzalis in Proconsularis, was present[1]. A letter of Pope Martin I. in 650, addressed "*Electo spirituali consensu Catholicae Carthaginiensium Ecclesiae,*" etc., seems to shew that Victor was dead, and his successor not yet appointed[2].

From this time onwards until the Saracen conquest was complete, the records of the Church in Africa are a blank. It has been said that the fate of Monothelitism in the Province is uncertain; and there is nothing to tell of the future of the Donatists or the state of the monks. For fifty years before the fall of Carthage

[1] Morcelli, s.a. 648.

[2] Morcelli, s.a. 650.

unfathomable darkness overspreads the church life of Africa, and the ecclesiastical historian can only try to piece together from the scanty secular history of the times the probable fate that befell the Church during the miseries of the Saracen conquest.

CHAPTER VIII.

The end of African Christianity.

The stand of the African Church against the Monothelites is to all intents and purposes the last thing we know about its history. It is true that the Church as an organization existed for another century, and that for nearly nine hundred years after the Saracen conquest there were still Christians in Africa, who professed to represent the Church of St Cyprian and St Augustine, but for all that hardly anything is now known of these last thousand years, and it is plain that, though the Church of Carthage was not dead, it was no longer able to take an active share in the life of Western Christendom, or to extend its influence in its own country. In fact from the beginning of the seventh century the African Churches were in a moribund condition, and though they managed to cling to life until nearly the end of the sixteenth century, it was with so feeble a hold that from the fall of Carthage, in 698, no one would have reckoned them amongst the number of living communions.

Still the story of these last centuries would be most interesting, and an account of the failure of the

ecclesiastical organization, and an explanation of the marvellous vitality of the Faith, would be of the utmost importance, if it were possible to supply them. Nothing is known of the fortunes of the Church during the Saracen conquest, and the glimpses we get of the African Christians afterwards are sufficient only to record, not to explain their survival. The ecclesiastical historian can indeed merely examine the secular events of the Mohammedan invasion, and try to see how they influenced the Church, and then rest content with collecting the isolated facts that tell of the struggling existence of Christianity under Moslem rule.

In 646 the Roman power in Africa entered upon the last stage of its history. The Province, once the fairest and most fertile of all the imperial dominions, was for more than half a century to be given up to every form of misery and desolation, and then to pass away from the influence of Christianity and civilization into a bondage from which it is even now not entirely freed. The story of these dismal fifty years opens appropriately with the treachery of the governor of Africa. For some time the Prefect Gregory had been planning a revolt against the Emperor Constans II.; but perhaps dread of the Saracens, who had conquered Alexandria in 641, made him pause before cutting himself off from his most powerful protector. However, in 646 the standard of rebellion was raised, and Gregory declared himself the independent ruler of Africa[1].

Little is known of the nature of this revolt. Carthage was, indeed, still held for the emperors by

[1] Theophanes, s.a. 638.

a small number of Christians, and the usurper established his power at Suffetula in Byzacene, or, as it is called by the Arabian historians, Sbéitla. The choice of an inland capital and the large number of his forces seem to shew that Gregory had succeeded in gaining the support of the Berber tribes against the imperial power. The Saracens, indeed, assert that his authority extended from Tangiers to Tripoli; but no doubt this is an exaggeration, caused by ignorance of the facts and desire to magnify a defeated enemy[1].

The usurper had not long to enjoy his ill-gotten power. Even before he revolted the Mohammedans had begun to attack Africa, and the first expedition was quickly followed by others. In 642 Amrou-ben-el-Assi had plundered Fezzan and Tripoli[2], and five years later a second raid was made. The Caliph Othman-ben-Offan despatched Abd-Allah-ben-Abou-Sark with nearly 12,000 troops[3] against Sbéitla. Gregory 647
raised an equal force, and met the invaders at Acouba. For several days a fierce contest raged without either side gaining any advantage, but at length reinforcements under Abd-Allah-ben-Zobéir arrived for the Saracens, and the Christians, worn out by continuous fighting, were routed in all directions. Gregory himself was slain, and Africa was left defenceless before the invaders[4].

[1] Ibn Khaldoun (Slane's transl.), I. 208—9; En Noweiri, I. 317; El K'Airouani, p. 39, etc., El Hakem.

[2] Ibn Khaldoun, I. 302; En Noweiri, I. 313; El K'Airouani, 36, etc.

[3] En Noweiri (I. 314—5) gives the Saracen forces as only 20,000; but this is very unlikely.

[4] Theophanes, s.a. 639.

In spite of this signal victory the Mohammedans did not yet think of making a permanent conquest. Satisfied with the great booty which they had found at Sbéitla, after pushing their ravages as far as Gafça and Mermadjenna, that is to say through all Byzacene and some part of Numidia, they consented to be bought off for 300 kintars of gold. For fourteen months, however, they remained in Africa, and the Province lay helpless before them; they imposed an annual tribute, which Habakia was left behind to collect, but with neither arms nor authority to enforce[1].

Meanwhile the Emperor Constans II. looked on with short-sighted indifference. Was not Gregory a rebel? Had not Africa revolted? What did the sufferings of provincials matter to him as long as they paid their regular tribute? So an imperial agent Aulima was despatched, and the miserable Africans were expected to contribute to the treasuries of both Greeks and Saracens. However, Habakia, seeing his own gains endangered, drove this new governor out, and allowed the Greeks to choose Eleutherion as an independent ruler for themselves[2].

For the next twenty years Africa enjoyed rest from Saracen invasions, as the domestic politics of the Mohammedans occupied all their attention, and they had no time to enlarge their conquests, until the assassination of Ali in 661 decided the quarrels of the Kharedjites and the Koreishites in favour of the former. Most unfortunately for the Africans victory inclined to the more fanatical party, in whose eyes the

[1] Ibn Khaldoun, I. 110, II. 225; En Noweiri, I. 314, 324.

[2] En Noweiri, p. 324.

extension of the dominions of Islam was an act of the greatest piety[1]. Perhaps even now the Province, defended as it was by the frontier deserts, might have successfully resisted invaders, if only the needs of the time had been recognized. But no necessity could force the Africans into union; the twenty years of respite were wasted, and, when the storm broke again, Christians and heathen, Greeks and Moors, were as much divided as they had ever been.

The advance of the Saracens was resumed in 661. Benzert, the ancient Hippo Diarrhytus, was ravaged by their fleet under Moavuiah-ibn-Hodaidj. Another raid in 663 swept over Tripoli. A third reached the heart of Byzacene and captured Djeloula, the ancient 'oppidum Usaletaneum,' the miserable inhabitants of which were butchered or enslaved. At length the Emperor Constans II. was roused to take some feeble steps to save the wretched province, and by his orders a small fleet under Nicephorus sailed to Souça and landed a few troops. However, as soon as the advance of the Saracens was announced, panic seized upon them and they fled in confusion to their ships at the first brush with the invaders. Finally a fourth expedition in 668 under Rouaïfi pillaged all the sea-coast of Tripoli and captured the island of Djerba (Girba)[2].

The time had now come for a serious attempt to conquer and occupy the Province. Henceforward the Saracens were no longer content with marauding raids, but set themselves to form regular settlements in the rich plains of Africa. In 669 Okba-ben-Nafa was

[1] Mercier, *Hist. de l'Afrique*, Bk. II. ii. 6—8.

[2] Mercier, II. ii. 9—10.

nominated Governor of Africa and despatched with 10,000 Mussulmans and some converted Berbers to establish himself in Byzacene. The Djerba, or the southern frontier districts of the Province, were again overrun, Gafça and other towns were taken, and the Christians treated with the utmost barbarity. But the most important achievement of this expedition was the building of a town, called Kairouan, right in the heart of Byzacene. Such an outpost as this gave the Saracens an excellent base from which to push forward future invasions, and served to overawe the inhabitants and prevent the Mohammedan Berbers from reverting to their former religions.

Okba was not allowed to enjoy the fruits of his victory, for the new governor of Egypt, who had a kind of suzerainty over the Saracens in Africa, sent in A.D. 672 Abou-el-Mohadjir to supersede him. The new general shewed his childish petulance in objecting to his predecessor having the honour and glory of founding Kairouan, and actually pulled it down and erected another town, a few miles distant from the old site. The Moors under their chief Koçeila determined to test whether the new governor was able to hold his own, and rose against him, but were however defeated at Tlemçen and were forced to profess Mohammedanism. This trouble disposed of, El Mohadjir turned his arms against the Christians of the north-east, and captured the peninsula of Cherik (Cape Bon). From thence he marched to attack Carthage itself, but met with a vigorous resistance. A fierce battle raged all day, and at nightfall the Saracens drew off and encamped on a mountain in the south of

Tunis. The attack was not renewed, a treaty was made, and for a time the Christians had peace[1].

What was now the position of the wretched province? Already it seems that the power of Rome had passed away, and in less than thirty years from the first onslaught upon the outskirts of Africa the Saracens had overrun all its most fertile parts. Already the Christians seemed no longer formidable, though still perchance strong enough to defend themselves, and the invaders decided to leave them alone until the situation demanded their overthrow. The weakness of the Christians was shewn alike in their impotence to even threaten the foundation of Kairouan, or to make a defensive alliance with the Moors; and the Saracens shewed their contempt by leaving them on their flank while they pressed forward into the heart of the province.

Meanwhile as the power of the Cross grew less, that of the Crescent rapidly increased. In Kairouan the Mohammedans had a base of operations right in the heart of Byzacene, and only three days' march from Carthage[2], which acted as a wedge to split up the country before them. The Moors remained as ever disunited; some of them, like the people of Koçeïla, were compulsorily converted. Even the independent tribes could offer no resistance, and the invaders were able to push their expeditions as far as Tlemçen, the extreme limit of the Roman power as restored by Belisarius. Africa indeed lay at the feet of the Saracens, who could choose their own time to complete their conquest. Such a fate as this necessarily implied much

[1] Mercier, II. ii. 11—12. [2] Fournel, *Les Berbers*, p. 163.

suffering. The Greek historians declare that eighty thousand provincials were reduced to slavery; and though this may be an exaggeration, the very greatness of the exaggeration reveals the effect produced on the minds of contemporaries[1].

In 681 Okba returned to the scene of his old triumphs and at once proceeded to hasten the conquest of Africa. He performed the wonderful feat, worthy of the Roman army in its prime, of marching across the wild and mountainous interior until he reached the Atlantic Ocean. His first steps on coming back to Africa were to throw El Mohadjir into chains, to demolish New Kairouan and rebuild the old city; and then setting out on his march, he took the important position of Mount Aurasius and captured Baghaia and Lambaesa, towns on the North and North-east of this table-land. Next turning South, he passed through the whole of the Zab and went by Tiharet to Ceuta, the town facing the Straits of Gibraltar, and from there marched right through the heart of the Atlas mountains till he reached the sea at Sous, not far from the southern boundary of modern Morocco.

A few interesting events happened on this long, daring march. At Lambaesa the Saracens had to overcome a fierce resistance on the part of the garrison of Moors and Christians, one of the few instances in which there is any record of an alliance of these peoples, without which it was hopeless to try to cut off the invaders. Tiharet, too, was defended by Moors and Franks, but the latter returned home on the fall of the place. At Ceuta, Okba was received with politic

[1] Theophanes, s.a. 661; Cedrenus, *Hist. Com.* i. 764.

friendliness by Julian, the semi-independent governor, and was informed that the Moors of the district were the grossest barbarians, and were practically subject to no authority whatever. At Nafis in Morocco, he was nearly defeated by the Masmoudah tribes, but was rescued in his peril by the "Zeneti" or "converted"; probably this is another instance of the jealousy which ruined Africa, and tribal hate rather than religious zeal seems likely to have inspired the rescue of these so-called converts.

On his return march Okba regarded his conquest as so secure that he could safely split his army into detachments, but unfortunately he forgot that in his insolent folly he had insisted upon Koçeïla, the Berber chief, performing menial duties. He paid dearly for this impolitic arrogance. Suddenly, when he had reached Tobna in Numidia with only a few cavalry, he found the country in arms, and the gates of Badis shut against him. However he made a gallant attempt to capture Tehouda, and there, with his rival El Mohadjir and all his small force, he met a soldier's death at the hands of a large force of Christians and Moors. His fall was the signal for a general rising of the Berbers, and Zohéïr-ben-Kaïs, his successor, was forced to abandon Kaïrouan and Africa, and betake himself to strong encampments in Barca[1].

Once more Africa enjoyed a brief period of repose. The Saracens with as little wisdom as their foes, but with far less danger to themselves, indulged in the luxury of civil war. But after five years of strife the

[1] On Okba's expedition, see Mercier, III. ii. 13—14; Fournel; Ibn Khaldoun, I. 22, etc., I. 287, etc.; En Noweiri, p. 322, etc.; El K'Airouani, § 13.

Kharedjites won the day, and set themselves to deliberately exterminate the Unbelievers, root and branch. In 688, Zohéïr advanced into Africa and drove Koçeïla from Kairouan to Mems, a town on the eastern branch of the Medjerda river. Here a bloody battle was fought; on the one side blind fanaticism and proselytizing zeal, on the other the love of liberty and the power of despair animated the combatants; in the end the invaders carried all before them, and the Berbers with their Christian allies were routed with awful slaughter. El K'Airouani declares the fugitives were butchered like sheep; and Ibn Khaldoun dates the fall of the Latin power from this battle. The Moors suffered as much as their allies and the Cloureba tribe was almost entirely destroyed[1].

In spite of this signal triumph Zohéïr decided to evacuate Africa. Of his reasons, the most potent was the smallness of his force and the turbulence of the enemy, the most curious the fear lest possession of too much wealth should injure his soul. In his retreat he shewed the faults and shared the fate of his great predecessor Okba. He travelled with too small an escort, through over-confidence, and was defeated and slain by a few Greeks who had landed at Barca.

For seven years, from 690 to 697, Africa was free from the Saracens, but rent with civil war. Koçeïla was now no more, and on his death all the petty chiefs, who had been his dependents, struggled to succeed to his power; perhaps, the Christians also tried to recover their lost dominions. The internal dissensions of the Mohammedans however prevented them from

[1] Mercier, II. ii. 17—18.

taking advantage of the divisions of Africa, and before they were ready to renew their invasion a great power had arisen out of the confusion of the Province. The government of Africa had been seized by the virile hands of Dihia or Damia, Queen of the Djerouana, commonly known by her title of Cahina or the Diviner[1].

In 697 the fifth expedition of the Saracens started from Egypt. Hassan-ibn-en-Noman-el-Ghassani was despatched to Africa with 40,000 men and occupied Kairouani without resistance. His first step was to discover the most dangerous of his foes, who were still too divided to be considered as one force. The Christians of Carthage enjoyed this dangerous distinction, and against them Hassan immediately marched. He seems to have taken the city completely by surprise. The inhabitants of the suburbs were put to the sword, the aqueducts were unguarded and immediately cut, and the people within the walls were forced to enter into negotiations. The Saracens were promised supplies for all their needs if they would undertake not to enter the city. Whether these terms were accepted is not clear; probably there was no time to effect any settlement, for the same night all who were able to flee stole away by sea, some to Sicily, others to Spain. Next day Hassan entered the almost deserted city. None but the meanest inhabitants were left, and much of the most valuable booty had doubtless disappeared. In their rage at being thus cheated, the conquerors pillaged and burnt on every side, and all who had not succeeded in getting away had to pay the penalty of their countrymen's escape. The neighbouring Berbers hastened to seize

[1] Mercier, II. ii. 19—21.

Carthage when Hassan was gone, and continued the work of destruction begun by him; but they were soon driven out by the Saracens, the buildings were razed to the ground, and a small Mohammedan garrison was left to hold the site of the once glorious city.

The Christians made one last struggle to regain Africa. The weakness of the Moslem force did not escape the Emperor Leo (The Isaurian), and John the Patrician was despatched to retake Carthage. The principal defence of the harbour was a chain stretched across its mouth, but the fleet broke this and the city at once fell. The Saracen garrison was put to the sword, and once more for a few months the Roman Empire could count Carthage amongst its dominions. John did not rest content with the capture of the city, but went on to free the towns in the neighbourhood which still resisted the Mohammedans, and, leaving a small force behind for the winter, sailed away home.

The Christians' success was very short-lived. In the spring of 698 Hassan once more marched against the deserted city and easily drove out its Greek defenders. The Caliph Abd-el-Melik-ben-Merouan had heard with the utmost consternation of the success of John, and he now bade Abd-el-Aziz, the governor of Egypt, send a thousand Coptic families to form a strong colony at Carthage. Hassan also improved the port by a canal at Rades, and built a naval arsenal, so that the modern Tunis became one of the chief bulwarks of the Saracen domination of Africa[1].

[1] For the capture of Carthage, see Mercier, II. ii. 22; Fournel; En Noweiri, p. 339; El K'Airouani, § 22; Bk. i. p. 12; Theophanes, s.a. 690; Zonar. *Ann.* III. 76—7.

With Carthage fell the last vestiges of the power of the Empire over the old province; and the rest of the story of the Saracen conquest of Africa is concerned with the subjection of the Moors alone.

But these were destined to give a great deal of trouble before they were finally conquered, and the struggle was sufficiently protracted to complete the devastation of the once fertile province. For at length the Berber tribes were united, and their Queen Cahina was prepared to resist the invaders to the utmost. Hassan, as soon as Carthage was recovered, turned against her and was severely defeated at Ouad-Nini near the Mishiana River, not far from Baghaïa and Mount Aurasius; and so strong indeed did the Moors seem that he once more retreated to Barca, and remained there for five years in an entrenched camp.

Cahina turned this respite to the best advantage by the policy of a true barbarian. She argued that the invaders were attracted merely by the fertile plains and the luxurious remains of the old Roman civilization, and that, were the lowlands to become as barren as the mountains, there would be little fear of further attack. As for herself and her people, they cared nothing for these things; the bare living afforded by the uplands more than satisfied their simple wants. She therefore determined to make Africa as unattractive as possible and to put an end to the invasions by removing the cause. The whole province was to be laid waste; from east to west fire and destruction were to reduce everything to desolation, and the plains were to be made as sterile as the hills. Her orders

were obeyed with too great thoroughness, and she did not foresee the inevitable consequence. Her barbarity alienated the lowland population, and the small farmers and the few Christians who remained now looked for the advent of the Mohammedans as their salvation from the Moors[1].

In 703 the last act of the tragedy begins. Hassan again advanced, and defeated and slew Cahina in the district of Kastiliya, not far from Mt Aurasius. With her fell the independence of Africa, and the next few years saw the Saracen power finally established from Tripoli to Ceuta. The conquest was not, however, due to the might of the Mussulman arm alone. Like India, Africa could only be conquered by the help of the native tribes. Hassan saw the hopelessness of attempting to subdue the mountainous districts of Mauritania with his own men, and he raised a large number of auxiliaries from the Berber tribes. The sons of Cahina were put at the head of 12,000 Moorish warriors, and by their aid the Saracen dominions were rapidly enlarged. However, Hassan was not to finish the work he had begun; in 705 he was superseded by Mouça-ben-Nocéir, who was the first governor of Africa independent of the province of Egypt. The new leader completed the subjection of the west; frequent expeditions established the Mohammedan rule in Mauritania, and even Julian, the semi-independent governor of Ceuta, was at length induced, possibly for private reasons, to form an alliance with the victorious invaders.

[1] For Queen Cahina, see Mercier, II. ii. 23—4; El K'Airouani, §§ 23—4; Ibn Khaldoun, I. 207, etc., III. 173, etc.; En Noweiri, p. 339, etc.

In 708 Nocéïr returned to Kaïrouan, and the conquest of Africa was at last complete[1].

But what had become of the Roman and Christian population? In the first place it must be remembered that long before the Saracen invasions the dominions of the Romans had begun to contract. The Moors had encroached on every side, and the boundaries of the Province had steadily receded, until in the first years of the seventh century they included little more than Proconsularis, part of Byzacene, some of Numidia, and the eastern districts of Mauritania Sitifiensis. As soon as the Saracen storm burst the wealthier Christians fled. Ibn Khaldoun[2] distinctly says that "the Franks, driven from their African possessions, returned to their country beyond the sea," and again, "the débris of the Frankish and Greek population took refuge in Sicily and Spain." In another place he tells us how Nocéïr found "Africa changed to a vast solitude," and that the Berbers alone continued to resist. En Nowéiri[3] too records the flight of the people of Carthage to the Mediterranean Isles. For the Province made no resistance worthy of its former power. There was no attempt to unite the Moors and Romans against the invaders, and only in a very few instances do we find them fighting side by side. At Lambaesa and Tiharet the garrisons were of mixed race, at the battles of Tehouda and Mems an allied force fought; but the Christians never took the lead in defending the Province, and after the victory of Zohéïr in 668

[1] Mercier, II. ii. §§ 25—26.

[2] Ibn Khaldoun, III. 191, 193; I. 215.

[3] En Nowéiri, p. 339.

a united front was not again presented to the Mohammedans.

There was besides a great difference in the ways that the two nations resisted. The Berbers fought bravely for their native land, and under Koceïla and Cahina managed to check for a time the Saracen advance. Their success might have been permanent if they had been united; but internal differences were their ruin, and their lack of cohesion and the attraction of the sensual Moslem religion stood in the way of a prolonged resistance. In fact the defence of the Moors failed, not because they lacked vigour, but because their vigour was misapplied and misdirected. On the other hand, the Christians seemed incapable of self-preservation, and their whole policy betrays the utter feebleness of a worn-out race. After the fall of Gregory the story of the defence of Africa consists in a catalogue of ineffectual attempts at succour by the Emperors, and inglorious truces and retreats on the part of the provincials. That their strength was still not to be despised is proved by the reluctance of the Saracens to attack them directly, but, instead of opposing the invaders whenever possible, the degenerate Romans stood ignobly on the defensive. As soon as Gregory was slain the Christians of Carthage bought Zobéïr off. The expedition of Nicephorus fled at the first approach of the enemy. Kaïrouan was founded without any interference from Carthage, and the Christians of Numidia were content with the peninsula of Cherik. On the first attack of Carthage the inhabitants fled, and the temporary success of John the Patrician only proves how unequal the Empire was to

the task of reconquering Africa. In fact, as the Saracens advanced the power of the old masters of the Province dwindled away. The Roman population of Africa seems rather to have decayed of its own hopeless unsoundness than to have been destroyed by direct violence on the part of the Saracens.

Of course large numbers of Christians were reduced to slavery by the Mohammedans, for flight was not possible to the poorer of the Romans. Theophanes says that 80,000 were carried off by Okba[1], and En Nowéiri puts the prisoners of Hassan at 35,000[2]; but these very numbers shew that the Saracens might have been met by a bolder resistance. But for the most part the Christians fled, and the once masters of Africa were scattered over the face of the earth. In 684, the 14th Council of Toledo in Spain invited Potentinus, Bishop of Utica, to attend, and Gregory II. had to warn the German episcopate against African fugitives tainted with Donatist and Manichaean heresies[3].

The conquest of the Province seems to have followed these lines. At the beginning the Roman inhabitants held the north-east districts and were hemmed in on all sides by Moors, over whom they had little more than a nominal suzerainty. Both for geographical and strategic reasons the first Saracen attacks were directed against the Berbers, for the prestige of the Empire and its command of the sea made the invaders unwilling to provoke its resistance until they had secured a firm basis for their power in the first countries that they reached west of the terrible deserts of Barca.

[1] Theophanes, s. a., 661. [2] En Nowéiri, p. 341.

[3] Morcelli, s. a. 669; Greg. II. Ep. 124.

When this was done and the Saracens could feel secure in a proper centre of operations with a regularly established line of communication with Egypt, they were ready to press on against the Christian portions of Africa. But their rapid advance in the south and west and their extensive depredations had frightened the remains of the old Roman population, and all who could had fled, long before the first march on Carthage, to Europe and the Mediterranean isles. The mere reputation of the Saracens was enough; before their steady progress the power of the Christians crumbled to dust, and when the time came for the invaders to make their final attack the remnants of the Roman Empire were capable of only the feeblest resistance. The people who had ruled the Province for more than seven hundred years were gone; not because they were conquered or slain, but because, enervated by centuries of luxury, wasted by endless conflicts with a remorseless border-foe, when they were exposed to the attack of a new and terrible enemy they had preferred flight to a hard and doubtful conflict.

As soon as the Saracens were firmly established in their new dominions they set about organizing the government and began to oppress the few Christians that remained. Hassan had imposed the Kharedj, a tax of one-third on all their possessions, upon Christians and Berbers alike, and this was now still more strictly exacted by Nocéïr[1]. "All the Christian churches were made mosques," says the author of the Baïan, and

[1] Ibn Khaldoun, § 25.

though this was not literally true, all who refused to accept Islam were subjected to the greatest hardships[1].

No doubt the remorseless weight of the Moslem rule played havoc with the weaker Christians. The advantages to be derived from being ranked with their conquerors, safety from religious persecution and the seductions of the simple and sensual Mohammedan creed, must have been powerful arguments to the rude Berber minds, and probably the great majority of the Christians who remained had more Moorish than Roman blood in their veins. If, moreover, it is remembered that Africa, though conquered, was not at peace and that civil wars with all their attendant massacres and destruction continued for nearly forty years, it will not seem to have been a great exaggeration on the part of Abd-el-Rahman when in 743 he said he could send no more Christian slaves to the Caliph, because all Africa had now become Mohammedan[2]; for many of those who had for a time been true to their Faith had doubtless fallen away, and others must have been slain, while those who remained would not obtrude their creed on their conquerors or would flee away to inaccessible mountain fastnesses. It is perhaps possible that certain Berber tribes whose customs still shew some traces of Christian morality, such as the practice of monogamy, and of Christian institutions, such as Baptism and the use of cruciform ornaments, may trace their origin to the semi-Christianized tribes who fled before the power of Islam[3].

[1] Mercier, II. ii. 26. [2] Gibbon, ch. 51.

[3] Mas Latrie, *Relations et Commerce de l'Afrique Septentrionale*, pp. 7—8.

From this time onwards N. Africa ceases to be reckoned as a Christian country. Christians were indeed still to be found within the limits of the old Roman province, but taken as a whole the religion of Africa was now Mohammedan and the survival of a few followers of Christ can only be accounted for by the fewness of the numbers. No longer has the historian to record the development and power of a great organization; he can now merely watch the few remnants that remain, until they too at the end of nine hundred years are swept away.

When the rule of the Saracens had been firmly established their bitterness against the Christians seems to have been much diminished. Just as in Toledo, Sardinia, and Sicily the Moslem conquerors through caution or carelessness allowed their subjects freedom of religion, so in Africa Christianity was tolerated. The churches were not destroyed, but mosques were built opposite to them. The mosques flourished, the churches fell into decay, and the social and political strength of Islam was a more dangerous foe to Christianity than direct religious persecution[1].

It was not long before the number of the Christians had so far diminished that the Apostolic succession was in danger, for the African bishops were too few in number to consecrate successors according to canonical rule. An appeal was made to the Jacobite patriarch of Alexandria, and he sent in 837 a mission of five bishops to foster the last remnants of Christianity in Africa. This recourse to foreign help proves how near the great

[1] El Tidjani, in Mas Latrie, p. 7.

communion of Carthage was to utter extinction[1]. But even the few Christians who remained were not united; in 893 a schism arose among them, which caused an appeal to Pope Formosus, and was referred to Archbishop Fulc of Rheims[2].

For 150 years no more is heard of the African Church. None of its bishops attended the seventh General Council at Nicaea in 787, or the Council of Constantinople in 869, and yet the next record of it shews its political power was not to be despised. Indeed a meteor-like flash of glory brightens up its history. In 1048, El Moëzy, the Ziride, set up as an independent ruler in Africa and tried to form a Berber kingdom. The Caliph El Mostancer sent the Hilaliens, or predatory Arabs from higher Egypt, to recover his dominions, and for three years, 1052–5, all Africa was given up to plunder and violence. In this disorder the Christians were not directly attacked, but of course suffered as much as the rest of their neighbours. As a measure of self-defence they organized themselves under the leadership of a certain Mornak, and took up a position at Hamman el Lif, a town five leagues west of Tunis. Here they beat off all enemies and became so strong that the Emir of Carthage left them alone, and even granted them a strip of fertile land whereon they could live an independent life. This territory was called Mornak until almost our own time, and contains the ruins of a synagogue and of another building which may have been a basilica[3].

[1] Gibbon, ch. 51. [2] Mas Latrie, 19.
[3] Mas Latrie, 26—9.

The prospects of the Christians evidently improved for a time and it may be to this period that a document of great importance relates. A Notitia of the bishops of Africa, the Balearic Isles, and Sardinia, has come down to us, of which unfortunately both the origin and date are unknown. For it declares that at the time of its compilation there were no less than 47 sees existing in these countries. In Byzacene there were 14, amongst which the most prominent were Carthage, Carthago Proconsularis, Gafsa, and Adrumetum; in Numidia 15, including Calama, Hippo, and Constantine; in Mauritania Sitifiensis one, Rhinocucurum, and in Tingitana and the isles 17, of which the chief were Ceuta, Majorca, Minorca and Sardinia. Of these bishops four held archiepiscopal rank[1].

From this Notitia it seems that the two provinces of Proconsularis and Byzacene were now united, and that the distribution of the Christians of this period—if this document can indeed be attributed to this period—corresponds closely with the dominion of the Church in its prosperity. In the eastern parts of Africa there are now 14 sees, in Numidia 15, but in the first Mauritania, there is only one, while of the 17 recorded under the second Mauritania, several are not African at all. It seems then that in the eleventh, as in the fifth century, the Gospel of Christ had made few converts amongst the wild barbarians of the mountains of Mauritania[2].

[1] Mas Latrie, p. 28.

[2] The Notitia as given in Bp Beveridge's *Pandectae Canonum* (Oxford, 1672), Vol. II., note to p. 142, is

There is one curious omission in this Notitia. The Bishopric of Gummi is not mentioned. Where it was is uncertain; M. de Mas Latrie identifies it with Mornak, but on merely conjectural grounds. But of the importance of Gummi in the eleventh century there

Sub gloriosissimo Eparcho Africae.

1. Cartagena Proconsularis
2. Sybiba
3. Campsia
4. Cileos
5. Junces
6. Talepteo
7. Cascala
8. Castellae
9. Pezana
10. Mamida
11. Madasuba
12. Colules
13. Capses
14. Adramytto

Provincia Numidiae.

1. Calama
2. Tebete.
3. Hippon
4. Nuzidias
5. Castramagae
6. Bades
7. Meleum
8. Leradus
9. Castrum Bedere
10. Scele
11. Egerinesium
12. Titessin
13. Bages
14. Constantine
15. Sitiphnos

Provincia Mauritaniae Primae.

1. Rhinocucurum.

Provincia Mauritaniae Secundae.

1. Septum
2. Septum, ad partem Thenessi
3. Spanias
4. Mesopotameni ad partem Spaniae
5. Najurica, insula
6. Menyca, insula
7. Insula Sardow
8. Carallus, metropolis
9. Iures
10. Sanaphas
11. Sines
12. Sulces
13. Phaesiana
14. Chrysopolis
15. Aristianes
16. Limne
17. Castrum Tutar.

is no doubt. In fact so much did its bishop take upon himself that he aroused the anger of three of his brethren, Thomas, Peter, and John, who appealed against him to Rome. In 1053, Leo IX. issued two decretals in their favour censuring the presumptuous prelate. He praised Peter and John for trying to call a council according to the ecclesiastical rule; he ordered annual synods to be held when possible; and he declared the Bishop of Carthage to be the Metropolitan of all Africa, who was alone to receive the pallium, because St Cyprian had by his piety bestowed everlasting honour on the see. Whether the decision of the Pope closed the dispute is not recorded, but probably the see of Gummi gave way. It is however noticeable that five bishops are mentioned as being concerned in this quarrel[1].

This number was dangerously small, and great difficulty was once more found in carrying on the Apostolic succession according to the conditions of the canons. The bishops, too, found the other clergy and laity unwilling to respect their authority. In 1073 Cyriac, Bishop of Carthage, was urged by some of his clergy to lay hands upon a man[2] unfitted for his sacred calling, either through his age, ignorance, or morals. The bishop refused, and so great a disturbance was caused that the Mussulman Emir interfered and tried to induce Cyriac to accept the people's choice in order that peace might be preserved. Cyriac however stood firm in his resolution, and even when haled to prison,

[1] Mas Latrie, 29—31; Gibbon, ch. 51.

[2] It is not clear whether the people wished this man to be made a priest or a bishop.

publicly insulted, disrobed and scourged, he still persisted. In this crisis Gregory VII. wrote two letters, one of admonition to the people of Carthage, the other of exhortation to Cyriac. Once more our records fail without telling us how the matter ended.

Gregory soon had occasion to interfere again in the affairs of Africa. The number of bishops had still further fallen, so that only two were left where once there had been 400; and the Pope was asked to consecrate an African priest to ensure the presence of the canonical three. But no sooner had the new prelate returned to his native land than the Bishop of Hippo died, and the Church was in the same danger as before. Not only was it impossible to carry on the succession with only two bishops, but the number of Christians and the size of the area over which they were scattered demanded the services of at least three prelates. Gregory therefore wrote again to Cyriac and bade him choose, in consultation with his lately consecrated colleague, a priest worthy of the episcopate, on whom he would himself lay hands, if he came to Rome. Cyriac sent Servandus, with the assent of En-Naçer or Anzir, King of Mauritania. However the people of Hippo did not approve of his choice; for inhabiting as they did a city near the heart of the Moorish power, they were no doubt unwilling to submit to the dictation of the bishop of a place the importance of which was now based entirely upon historical grounds. Gregory therefore wrote to them to point out the obedience they owed to their bishop[1].

[1] Mas Latrie, 38—41; Gibbon, *loc. cit.*; Greg. VII. Epp. 19—21.

These few glimpses, scanty though they are, shew that in the eleventh century the position of the Christians amongst the Moors was not entirely unbearable. The establishment of Mornak shewed the strength of the Christians and the toleration of the Moors. The Emir of Carthage and the King of Mauritania both shewed a not unkindly interest in the selection of the Christian clergy. But more remarkable still are the letters which passed between Pope Gregory and the King En-Naçer. The Moors in allowing Servandus to go to Rome sent presents and friendly messages by him, and released many Christian prisoners. The Pope wrote and thanked him for this gracious act, reminded him of his promise to release yet more, and declared that such deeds were prompted by the hand of God, for both Christian and Mohammedan worshipped the same God, and both, though in different ways, daily praised and adored the Creator of the ages and the Ruler of the world[1].

Although the chief men among the Moors seem to have been disposed to tolerate the Church, it yet suffered great losses between 1053 and 1073. M. de Mas Latrie attributes the circumstance either to the stress of civil war, or to the possible apostasy of the Bishop of Gummi after the victory of Carthage, or to the gathering of the Christians to El Cala, the new capital of the Hammadites. However that may be, El Bekir writing in 1068 declares that Christianity has disappeared in Algeria, the Djerid, and Byzacene, but that at Tlemçen there still remains a Christian church and a Christian congregation[2].

[1] Greg. VII. Ep. 21.

[2] Mas Latrie, 38—41.

The toleration of the Church may have been due to the political events of the time. Africa was in disorder, and the strength of the Christian community of Mornak, with their relations to the steadily recovering power of Rome, made them a factor in the political situation. In 1007 Hammad, the son of Bologgiun, founded El Cala, between Msilah and Sétif, and peopled it with men collected from all parts, including many Christians. In 1014–5 he threw off the yoke of the Zirides, the local chiefs, declared himself directly under the Abassides of Egypt, and managed to secure the rule of all Numidia and Sitifiensis and of part of Caesariensis. In 1062 En-Naçer succeeded him, and five years later founded Bougie, to the west of El Cala, on the coast of Mauritania Caesariensis, near Saldae. To this new city El Mansour transferred the seat of government in 1090–1[1].

However, the Christians of El Cala still stayed there and kept up a regular organization after most of the population had migrated to Bougie. Their church was consecrated to the Virgin Mary and was served by Calife, the last of the African bishops of whom any records have endured. Round this church a few legends have gathered. The monks of Mont Cassim were captured by the Moors as they sailed from Sardinia to Africa and were sent to El Cala until they were ransomed by Count Roger. Before they were released Azzar, the eldest, died and was buried before the high altar. One night, a month after his death, a Mohammedan Berber saw him sitting and reading his Bible at the entrance to the church. Startled at this

[1] Mas Latrie, 32—4.

apparition the Moor ran and called his neighbours with the words, "Come, run! you know the priest of the Christians, who is dead this month past. Come and see him sitting on the threshold of the church!" But by the time the neighbours had answered his summons the vision had disappeared. Moreover the lamp before Azzar's tomb was lighted by no human hands. It was vain to fill it with water instead of oil; an Arab Emir himself watched from Calife's house and saw a star descend from heaven and set the wick alight[1].

However, neither miracles nor sanctity could protect the Christians for ever. In 1152 Abd-el-Moumon took El Cala and dispersed the inhabitants. The foreign Christian merchants took refuge in Bougie, but the fate of the native Churches is unknown. The Almohades subdued all Africa and their conquests inevitably implied great sufferings to the conquered. In particular we hear that Abd-el-Moumon forcibly converted all the Jews and Christians of Tunis in 1159. Still in 1192, the name of the Archbishop of Carthage appears in the Liber Censuum, but this does not prove that the holder of the title had anything more than a nominal authority. Perhaps he was in exile or in hiding, and it is not impossible that, like the bishops *in partibus infidelium* of a later date, the nominal occupant of the see had never been near it at all[2].

In fact by the end of the twelfth century the native Christians had become a very insignificant body. International politics however were in their favour. The masters of Africa were forced to practise some sort of toleration and some Christian settlers were allowed the

[1] Pierre Diacre in Mas Latrie, 124—8. [2] Mas Latrie, 124—8.

free exercise of their religion. At least two Christian colonies were thus established. At Serdania near Kairouan and Djeloula the Sardinians had a settlement, and at Castilia near Touzer other foreigners, perhaps Spaniards, dwelt. But the presence of these Europeans did little to help the African Christians. For some adopted the habits and religion of their neighbours, and the others, busy with their own concerns and apprehensive of their own dangers, were indifferent to their needs.

On the other hand some good indirectly accrued to them through the number of Christian slaves in Africa; for their natural anxiety to escape from their captivity brought about a regular system of exchange of prisoners between the Europeans and the Moors. No doubt it was a very profitable business for the latter, and they therefore allowed the Christians to carry it on in their own way. For the Church, regarding the ransom of slaves as an act of piety, organized their restoration on a regular religious basis and entrusted it to the Franciscan and Dominican orders and to the Monks of the Redeemer, who were instituted for this special work. In 1189, Pope Innocent III. announced the foundation of this order to the Sultan Almanzor in a very impolitic letter. With a most arrogant air of superiority the Pontiff pities the benighted condition of the Moors, and declares that these new monks would devote one-third of their possessions to ransoming slaves, and would purchase "pagans" to exchange for Christians.

Though officially countenanced the monks had some

[1] Mas Latrie, 128—9.

risks to run. It was easier for the Sultan to declare he would protect them than to save them from the irresponsible violence of Moslem fanatics, and in 1226 Honorius III. was obliged to allow them to wear beards in order that they might attract less attention by conforming to the ordinary dress of the country. By this time they had become sufficiently numerous to need supervision and in 1223 a bishop was appointed over them. Besides ransoming prisoners they distributed alms, and no doubt they alleviated the sufferings and revived the faith of those whom they could not release[1].

No doubt too the indigenous Christians did not escape their attention, although by this time the Christians of Africa had developed many peculiarities which distinguished them from the Western Church. Gibbon asserts that the force of circumstances had driven them to adopt some of the characteristics of the Mohammedans around them. Like their Spanish brethren they submitted to circumcision; they abstained from pork and wine and were known as the Mozarabes or adoptive Arabs. They stood in fact halfway between the orthodox Christians and the Moslems around them; in belief they were followers of Christ, but in outward things they had conformed to the rules of Mahomet. It was therefore easy to distinguish them from other Christians living in Africa, and several families of the old African Church were found in Tunis when Charles V. landed there in 1535[2]. Leo the African thus describes the state of affairs in that city about this time[3]:—

[1] Mas Latrie, 130—3. [2] Gibbon, ch. 51.
[3] In Mas Latrie, 528—30.

"In the suburb near the gate of El Manera is a particular street, which is like another little suburb, in which dwell the 'Christians of Tunis.' They are employed as the guard of the Sultan and on some other special duties. In the suburb near the sea-gate, Bab-el-Baar (on the side of the Goulette), live the foreign Christian merchants, such as the Venetians, the Genoese, and the Catalans. There are all their shops and their own houses, separated from those of the Moors."

A most careful distinction was evidently drawn between the 'Christians of Tunis' and the merchants from Europe. The former have their special quarters, as in eastern cities all nationalities do, but they are allowed to live near the Moors; on the other hand the merchants are necessary to the trade of the city and must therefore be tolerated; but they are kept as near the edge of the town and as far from their Mohammedan neighbours as possible. The 'Christians of Tunis' were neither settlers from Europe nor renegades, but for the most part at any rate were the direct descendants of the great African Church. They performed special and honourable duties, and were allowed to exercise their religion unmolested in a chapel of their own.

However the end soon came. In 1583 the Turks, long masters of Algiers and Tlemçen, took Tunis and dethroned Mohammed, the last of the Aben-Hafis. The new conquerors were fanatical haters of Christianity, and all who refused to embrace Mohammedanism were in deadly peril from them. Their violence was chiefly directed against the native Christians, and while the foreigners were too useful or too well protected to be

persecuted to death, the poor remnant of the African Church was forced to apostatize or die[1].

The last blow had fallen, and by the end of the sixteenth century the great Church of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine had at length passed from the face of the earth. It was not extinguished without a struggle, and the vitality it had displayed for nearly a thousand years of oppression was worthy of the noble names with which it is inseparably associated. But now at last its long history was over and the fertile fields of North Africa were given up to the yoke of Islam, under which for the most part they remain to this day.

[1] Mas Latrie, 538—30.

CHAPTER IX.

Conclusion.

The Christian Churches of North Africa were founded about the end of the first century; for six hundred years they played an important, at times the most important part, in the development of Western Christianity, and were then crushed almost completely by the overwhelming force of the Mohammedan invasion, although a remnant still survived for nine centuries.

During their fifteen centuries of existence they experienced the most varied fortunes. For two centuries they had to struggle for life, as all other Christian communities struggled, against the forces of a State-established paganism; like other Churches they triumphed, and to them, as to others, the accession of Constantine promised peace. But now they were exposed to the attacks of a more insidious foe. Within their own ranks Donatism grew up, and the schism which at first merely divided them, threatened to conquer the Churches which gave it birth. The trouble continued for over a hundred years, but the wisdom of St Augustine, backed by the might of the State, forced

the sectaries to return or to leave the Church unmolested, and again there seemed every hope of peace. Once more their expectations were shattered; this time a foreign and heretical foe attacked the African Christians, and for a century they languished under the tyranny of half-civilized Arians. The arms of Belisarius restored the supremacy of the Province in temporal matters to the Empire, in spiritual matters to the Catholic Church, and for the next hundred and fifty years African Christianity was subject to no trials which an earnest faith could not hope to overcome. But in the seventh century the final misfortune overtook Africa, and the Province fell a victim to the resistless onslaught of the Moslem conquerors; the secular power of the Empire was for ever swept away, the Roman population was dispersed, and the Church was broken up and forced to seek what shelter it could.

To all appearance the Churches of Africa were now totally destroyed, but in spite of everything Christianity shewed a marvellous and unparalleled tenacity in its hold on the Province. For nine hundred years the Faith in Christ was handed down from father to son, and the Apostolic Succession was kept up with only occasional help from more favoured communions, in the heart of one of the most fanatically Mohammedan communions of the world.

Such a record as this would command admiration if African Christianity had concerned itself merely with its own people. Few other Churches can claim to have endured for six hundred years a constant succession of attacks from within and persecutions from without; but fewer still can boast that they have kept the flame

of Faith alive for nearly one thousand years, surrounded on all sides by bitter and unrelenting foes. But the Churches of Africa have still other claims to veneration. As long as their organization was complete, they played a worthy part in the controversies that agitated the early Christians, and whenever the orthodoxy of the world was in doubt, Africa was always found on the side of the right. At various times and with varying measures of success, Novatianism, Donatism, Pelagianism, Manichaeism, and Arianism, obtained a footing in the Province, but all alike were checked and forced to withdraw in confusion. In the controversy about the Three Chapters and in the repulse of the Monothelites the voice of Africa was heard with no uncertain sound, and the exposure of the errors of Pelagius was largely due to the vigour and zeal of St Augustine. The Christians of Carthage in fact formed one of the most influential and orthodox communions of the early Church, and they did much to fix the doctrines of Christianity as we know them, and to settle the canon in its present form.

Yet the Churches of Africa are no more, and the causes of their fall present a problem of the utmost interest. Unfortunately it can no longer be fully and certainly solved, for the destructiveness of the Saracens has swept away nearly all the records of the most critical time in their history; but some guesses may be made from the knowledge that has survived of their earlier years.

Three tests may be applied to discover the soundness of any communion. Orthodoxy of doctrine, personal piety, and efficient organization are necessary

for the well-being of a Church; but in none of these can the Africans be said to have been disastrously wanting. Indeed, as far as their teaching was concerned, they were more orthodox than Rome itself, and they offered a more prompt and stedfast resistance to the errors of Pelagius and the quibbles of Justinian than did the Popes themselves.

The personal piety and sound learning of individual members of the African Church are as easily proved. The names of Cyprian and Augustine stand out from their fellows throughout the world, and some less well-known Africans are worthy to be classed with them. The devotion of Deogratias and Eugenius won the respect even of the Vandals; the influence of Fulgentius filled the monasteries; the piety of Quodvultdeus procured for him the dignity of an Abbat at Rome. The details of the last years of the Church are too obscure to enable the list to be continued, but the courage of Reparatus at Constantinople and the trust of the great Gregory in Columbus do not bespeak any falling off from the high standard of the first few centuries; and the devotion that could support the Christians after the Saracen invasion was certainly of no poorer quality than that shewn by their forefathers, when exposed to the spasmodic rage of the heretical Vandals.

With the organization and discipline of the Church there was not much amiss. It is true that the various dioceses were not quite so closely knit as in some other countries, and that various important points were at first left to be settled by individual bishops instead of the Church as a whole; and it is true that, however it

may have worked practically, theoretically the mode of choosing a Primate was wrong. But still, taking it all in all, its ecclesiastical system suited Africa, and remained vigorous and strong as long as the Province remained under the Roman power. Indeed the African Christians once or twice proved themselves able to go behind the strict law and, casting aside its letter, to act effectively upon its spirit. During the Vandal persecution, whenever there was a short breathing-space, the Catholics set their house in order without regarding the regular limits of the dioceses or caring whether they encouraged the pretensions of Rome. Still more striking are the events of the contest with the Monothelites. The action of Fortunatus threatened to mislead the whole Church, and to prevent the Proconsular province in particular from expressing its true opinion. In this crisis had the Church shewn no power of adapting her course of action to the times, the result must have been either a misrepresentation of the views of an important section on a vital point, or a disorderly revolt against lawfully-constituted authority. Happily the Bishops of Proconsularis were able to shake themselves free from hidebound customs and to break the law in order to preserve the law. Gulosus, Bishop of Pupit, called a convention of his colleagues, and with them decreed the deposition of Fortunatus and the condemnation of the doctrines of the Monothelites. An occurrence such as this, in which the law was invoked to do that which it did not contemplate, and an unconstitutional act was performed in perfect accord with the best constitutional principles, speaks volumes for the reality of the discipline of the African Church. It

took place within fifty years of the extinction of the Christians of Africa as an organized body, and it seems to make the causes of that extinction all the harder to understand.

If the African Church right up to the time when its records cease can stand the threefold test, and can be proved orthodox in doctrine, pure in life, and sound in system, the reason of its fall must be found outside its religious life. One fact at once stands out when the history of the Province as a whole is regarded. African Christianity practically fell with the Imperial power and left but few traces behind. Now this coincidence points to a connexion between the two, and the previous life of the Province confirms the supposition. Twice before had the rule of Rome received severe shocks, once from the Moors and once from the Vandals, and in both cases had the Catholics been subjected to bitter persecutions. In the days of Firmus and Gildo, the Donatists had been triumphant; in the time of the Vandals the Arians had ridden roughshod over the orthodox; and now that the Saracens held all Africa, the Christians once more fell on evil days.

But there was this difference between the peril of Christianity in the eighth and in the fourth and fifth centuries; it was not so much a persecution as an extinction of the Faith; the time was no longer one of noble martyrs and heroic confessors; there were hardly any Christians to be found. The Church had gradually dwindled away with the Roman population; as the borders of the Province had been gradually pushed back by the pressure of the Moors, the territories of the Church had grown smaller too. Year by year and

century by century the arm of Rome had lost its strength and had become less and less able to defend the outlying districts of its dominions. Raid after raid had swept over the most fertile plains of North Africa, and in the mountainous parts of Mauritania independent Berber kingdoms had been set up. The fortunes of the Church had suffered with those of the State, and as the eagle had been slowly driven back, the Cross had been compelled to retire.

For on the whole the Christianity had gained but little hold on the Moors. It was strongest in the eastern or more civilized districts; but its foothold in Mauritania was never firm and in the end was lost altogether. It is true that some of the Bishops, as Quodvultdeus, Deogratias, etc. seem to have borne assumed names, and may therefore be those of men of Moorish origin; but these prelates probably came from the people of mixed blood, who lived in the interior and formed a connecting link between the Romans and the Moors. Amongst the pure Berber tribes there are hardly any traces of Christianity. Belisarius is said to have converted some who were known as the "Pacati," and Gennadius was praised by Gregory for his missionary efforts; but at other times the Moors are mentioned only as the enemies and persecutors of all Christian believers.

It was not so much Christianity as the mode of its presentation that repelled the Berbers. The marvellous survival of some form of Faith amongst the fanatical Mussulmans could only have been due to the Moors and Moorish resolution; for the Roman population had been dispersed or slain, so the only Christians

in Africa besides the captives from European countries must have sprung from the Moorish stock. The tenacity shewn in those centuries of trial was a distinctive trait of the Berber nature, and there is something very characteristic in the way in which that small remnant clung to Christianity in spite of all persecution and oppression. It is to be lamented that the Church in its prime had never managed to secure all this devotion for itself; if it had, the history of the Province and even of the world might have been different. The line dividing the Romans from the Moors would have been obliterated; the peoples would have been united; the Province would have been strengthened and a united front presented to the Saracen hordes.

This might have happened and at one time appeared almost likely to happen, but the uncompromising attitude of African Christianity nipped the first promise of Moorish Christianity in the bud. The Berber character was narrow but strong. Seizing upon certain vital principles of doctrine, it disregarded the rest and was prepared to sacrifice everything rather than give way in the matters on which it had pinned its faith. Extreme veneration for personal piety, separation from all weaker brethren and fierce intoleration were the principal marks of its religion. When the Moors were Christians they honoured martyrs and confessors with unmeasured admiration; when they were Mohammedans they paid more respect to their local saints than to the Prophet himself; and in these latter days the rise of the Mahdi and other Moorish seers proves that their character is still the same. Such men as these would accept Christianity after their own fashion

and no other, and most unfortunately for the chance of spreading the Faith in Africa the doctrines that appealed to them were not compatible with the spirit of the rest of the Christian Church. Twice within fifty years were there attempts to force the African communion into a policy of intolerant puritanism and bitter exclusiveness, and both the Novatians and Donatists declared it impossible for the saints to hold converse with sinners. In the second case, at any rate, this narrowness attracts profoundly the uncivilized element in the provincial population, and the origin of Donatism shews how greatly its career was affected by the national characteristics of the Moors.

It arose in Numidia, one of the least Romanized parts of the Province; it was favoured by the Berber leaders, Firmus and Gildo; it was supported by half-barbarian bands of fanatical Circumcelliones; many of its followers could speak Punic alone. The district of its birth, the nationality of its political leaders, the savagery of its rank and file and their ignorance of Latin bespeak a large uncivilized non-Roman element. Its practical suppression by St Augustine and its partial revival in the days of Gregory point to the same conclusion. As soon as the forces of Catholicism and Imperialism were marshalled against it, the once all-powerful organization disappeared from the more civilized districts of Africa; the spiritual and temporal power of Rome triumphed and not one word of the sectaries is heard for nearly two centuries. Then there is a fresh outbreak and in the very quarter where it might have been expected. Not in Roman Carthage or well-settled Byzacene, but in the West, in the

mountainous regions of Numidia and Mauritania the old trouble crops up again.

This revival, moreover, has certain peculiar circumstances connected with it. If the western bishops had been affected by the Donatist errors, it would have followed the ordinary lines of heresies and schisms; but at first, as far as the scanty records make anything clear, the higher ecclesiastics seem to have opposed the new teachings. The laity forced the bishops to accept the schismatical doctrines and were prepared to use violence to oust the Catholic clergy from their cures in favour of sectarians. The whole of Numidia was affected by the Donatist teaching, and the provincial synod could not be relied on to decide ecclesiastical questions according to the canons of the Church and the traditions of the Fathers; while in Proconsularis the episcopate were still so hostile to this perverted form of belief that it forgot moderation and wisdom in its anger.

The ultimate fate of Donatism is quite unknown; but if it be admitted that this type of Christianity attracted the Moors as much as it repelled the Romans, an unexpected conclusion must follow from the circumstances of the extinction of the Churches of Africa. The ruin of Donatism was the destruction of the one chance of perpetuating Christianity in North Africa. In the first place it prevented the building of the most efficient of all bridges between the Romans and the Moors; in the second place it weakened the Christians in numbers where they were strongest in tenacity. The wonderful fact of the survival of the Faith through nine hundred years of oppression cannot be

overrated, and the few bare facts that reveal its existence stand for numberless instances of heroic fortitude that have now been forgotten. If the Church had only succeeded in getting hold of the great mass of the Berber tribes, if it could only have enlisted under the banner of Christ all the enthusiasm that afterwards supported the cause of Islam, it might well have been that not only would the Saracens have never succeeded in crushing African Christianity after the conquest of the Province, but they might never have conquered the Province at all. As it was, the teaching which appealed strongly to the Berber mind was condemned by the leaders of the Church as imperfect, and those who taught and believed it were subject to the ban of the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. It was undoubtedly corrupt and it could not be reconciled with the spirit or much of the letter of the pure Gospel; still the faults of the Moors were those of their qualities, and if they had not been so fanatically narrow it may be doubted whether they would have shewn such marvellous resolution.

As far as our records go, the causes of the extinction of the Churches of North Africa may be stated as follows. They fell because they were the Churches of a party and not of a people; they appealed to the civilized Romans alone, and not to the barbarian Moors. Circumstances forced them to assume a hostile and uncompromising attitude towards the form of Christianity adopted by the Moors, and their life was bound up with that of the Roman domination in the Province. From the time of the Vandals this had been gradually weakened and its territories had been

steadily diminished; the alien population in Africa had decreased and with it the numbers of the Church. When the Saracen invasion came the Romanized inhabitants fled, and like the Jews of old were spread over the face of the world; as the Roman community dispersed, the Church dispersed and the disintegration of the Imperial power meant the disintegration of the ecclesiastical system also. Some few Christians remained when their brethren were gone, and these managed to preserve their separate existence with occasional help from more prosperous communions. Probably Moorish by blood, they display a marvellous resolution, and at times were even able to defy their persecutors; but their numbers were too small for them ever to become a lasting power, and in 1583 the Turks swept away for ever the last vestiges of the Church of Africa which still existed in the land made famous by the labours of Cyprian and Augustine.

It may be that the Catholics made a mistake in altogether refusing to countenance or adopt the methods of Donatism; probably their policy was dictated by the theological and political necessities of the time; but there can be no doubt that the African Churches were destroyed not because of their failings, not because they were corrupt, but because they failed to reach the hearts of the true natives of the Province. The system of Rome, the doctrines of Rome, the virtues of Rome were those of a civilized law-abiding nation; the system, the doctrines, and the virtues of the Moors were those of a barbarian and savage people. Both had their strong points and both their weaknesses; if the Moors were narrow and fanatical, they were faithful to the

heart's core; if the Romans were unbending and unaccommodating, they were blinded to the needs of their country by the troubles of the whole Church. But as it was, the Church in Africa as an organization was sure to disappear, not because its members fell away, but because they were dispersed, and when the foreign population of the Province was gone, there were hardly any Christians left to carry on in Africa the life of the alien Church of its former rulers.

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